commonweal

David Toolan
LOOKING AT THE '70s
The Editors
THE 'NEW MOMENT'

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SPRING BOOKS

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Correspondence

Bomb the banners

Philadelphia, Pa.

To the Editors: John Lyon is right in criticizing teary-eyed Hollywood-style madonnas [Mar. 25]. But certainly all statues are not in bad taste, and churches that have cut them out altogether are—artistically—pretty dreary places to be in. (They resemble bank vaults—"Temples of Blank White Cinder Block.") Surely if I had to choose between 1,001 tacky Infant of Pragues all dressed up and sparkling under the glow of two million votive candles, I would pick that over burlap banners proclaiming: "Have a great day; the Lord is behind you with a dose of sunshine." . . . If statues cannot be resurrected from the Lipstick Realm, at least the Roman church can be a little more imaginative in its use of "alternative" religious art. What about the icon? Who says their use is only for Eastern Catholic or Orthodox churches? I know I've never seen an icon that looked Hollywoodesque, and there's certainly nothing sentimental about them.

THOM NICKELS

Been there & back

Astoria, N.Y.

To the Editors: If, as Robert Cobain states [Mar. 11], the opposition to the IRA is fundamentally ideological, and support of NICRA and the more militant groups that flowed out of it was crypto-nationalist, I am happy to hear it.

If Bishop Cahal Daly believes that Republicans conceal their ideology, (presumably insidious), will he support the free circulation of Sinn Fein literature in Ireland, North and South? Will Cobain? Will they encourage our government to reverse its visa policy and allow *all* spokesmen to talk to Americans? I think not. The false symmetry of their arguments exposes the political vacuums in which they both circulate. Involved Irish-Americans and their friends have been there and back by now; they are well-informed and working toward unity at an encouraging pace.

If the British/Loyalist establishment had ever been able to democratize "Ulster," they would have done so by now. They cannot, given the systemic disease of state they have created, and they are running out of cards to play.

WM. J. BRODERICK

In the face of facts

Belfast, Northern Ireland

To the Editors: I was dismayed to encounter, in the *Belfast Telegraph*, a summary of an article which appeared recently in *Commonweal* ["A Protestant View of Northern Ireland," Mar. 11]. Its half-truths do a grave disservice to the Catholic community of Northern Ireland, and fly in the face of well-established facts about the situation here.

As to Reverend Cobain's allegation that the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland was characterized by violence, he is correct, but the violence was perpetrated on unarmed civil rights demonstrators by police and army. The allegation that the civil rights movement was inspired by nationalism is without foundation. Most Catholics in the early days of the Troubles wanted only to have the rights of first-class British citizens. Ironically, it was the repressive response of the Stormont government to their legitimate demands which reawakened their nationalism.

Discrimination against Catholics in the matter of jobs continues to exist in Northern Ireland. It is utterly specious to allege that Catholics discriminate against Protestants, if for no other reason than that they are not usually in a position to do so. The Fair Employment Agency has recently been investigating job discrimination in the larger state employers. It revealed that only three-to-five percent of managerial positions in the Northern Ireland Electricity Board are held by Catholics. The outrage of Unionist (Protestant) politicians, who resisted the whole concept of the FEA from the beginning and have now voted for its abolition, suggests that the agency's forthcoming report on the civil service and subsequent reports may establish equally damning evidence of discrimination against Catholics. Mr. Seamus Mallon, deputy leader of the Social Democratic and Labor Party (the constitutional Catholic party) has recently noted that in the Derry area, a strongly Catholic area, one in four Catholics is unemployed, but only one in fifteen Protestants. And this is in a strongly Catholic area! The unemployment rate among males in the province is reckoned at 25 percent, but in areas of Catholic West Belfast it is closer to 75 percent. Whether they are unemployed as a direct consequence of discrimination in the present, or because of discrimination in the past matters little to Catholics who have no jobs.

In the matter of housing, Catholics occupy a higher proportion of public housing for the good reason that they are economically worse off than Protestants. The public housing which they inhabit, like Divis Flats in Belfast, has frequently been described (by impartial observers) as the worst in Europe. Protestants refused to live in comparable public housing on Belfast's Shankill Road.

Catholics have no need to exaggerate their grievances in Northern Ireland. They were second-class citizens for the fifty years duration of the Stormont regime and they have since been further immiserated by the activities of the British Army and the Ulster police operating under draconian legislation (the Emergency Provisions and the Prevention of Terrorism Act) which suspends basic civil rights. Instead of conceding that a debt of social justice is now

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THE PASTORAL & THE NEW MOMENT

THE BISHOPS' pastoral letter, overwhelmingly approved at their Chicago meeting, speaks of nuclear arms as confronting humanity with "a new moment." Today, we seem to stand at a new moment within that moment. There is the pastoral letter itself, which not a few observers have described as a watershed event in the history of the U.S. church. Discussion of that letter will certainly continue in these pages for a long time. For now, we need only express our appreciation for the bishops' work, and our hopes that as many Catholics as possible immerse themselves in this document. Yes, the pastoral letter is not brief; yes, it is, in places, complicated. But that can also be said about income tax forms and auto maintenance manuals. One of the few discouraging moments at the Chicago meeting of bishops came when Archbishop Szoka of Detroit spoke of priests who had indicated their reluctance to read such a "long" document. (The pastoral letter is, in fact, equivalent to about an issue and a half of *Commonweal*.) For many Catholics, the message of the pastoral will have to be mediated through homilies, pamphlets, discussion guides, film strips, and what have you; for many others, there is no reason, save motivation, why they can't tackle it outright.

The pastoral letter is not, however, the only reason for speaking of a new moment within the new moment. On every side of the nuclear issue, we are seeing new uncertainties and a sense that everything must be thought through again. On the one hand, new life is being pumped into the movement for arms control. On the other, there is also the danger of irreversible steps in escalating the arms race. Consider some of the developments of the last year. McGeorge Bundy, Robert S. McNamara, George F. Kennan, and Gerard Smith called for consideration of a "no-first-use" policy in Europe. In other words, "elders" of American defense policy were reexamining what they themselves had so long been associated with. Paul Nitze, well known as a hard liner, achieved an informal agreement with the Soviets on new missiles in Europe, only to be disavowed (as was the Soviet negotiator) by his home government. Caspar Weinberger provided Congress with a report on U.S. defense plans that seemed to project a dangerously expanded notion of the role of nuclear deterrence. But the administration was also forced to confront the limits of what the American people and the American economy will allow it to do by way of arms spending. The freeze movement demonstrated the political viability of arms control, which had been put in doubt by the derailment of SALT II. And the European peace demonstrations revealed the political costs of *not* pursuing arms control. The "dense pack" scheme for basing MX missiles came a cropper in Congress, and the Snowcroft commission, set up by the president to deal with the problem, came out and said the unsayable: that, first, in the short run the "window of vulnerability," which so much recent strategic thinking was designed to close, is, as critics have charged, a figment of overactive strategic imagination; and, second, in the long run

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all fixed land-based missiles will prove vulnerable. Equally important, the Soviet leadership appears to be reaching parallel conclusions. Henry Kissinger, another "elder" of defense policy, has proposed, as did the Snowcroft commission, reversing the policy of equipping missiles with multiple warheads. Add to this the very fact of the Soviet change of leadership; the ominous talk of placing Soviet missiles in Central America to counter the deployment of Pershing IIs in West Germany; the reports of Soviet missile testing that may or may not have violated the unofficially observed bounds of SALT II; President Reagan's sudden and ill-considered "Star Wars" proposal; and Yuri Andropov's genuinely promising proposal on counting European warheads. Will the two superpowers continue to stall for advantage—the U.S. until we've pursued our current buildup or demonstrated our will by Congressional approval of the MX or deployment of the missiles in Europe next December; the Soviets until European peace demonstrations take their toll or America's '84 presidential election is over? The danger is that both capitals will drift right by the present "window of opportunity." The bishops' appeal for reasonable but nonetheless bold initiatives to counter the arms race could not come at a more appropriate time.

DOWN ON THE FARM

Let us put our cards on the table right from the start. We cannot claim great expertise on farm problems—a fact some of our readers will probably be quick to point out. Nonetheless, we are convinced that U.S. agricultural policy is fundamentally unsound, and that this has been the case for a good many years.

Consider first the dollars and cents of the question. In the last fiscal year federal costs for farm price supports zoomed to their highest level in their fifty-year history, and they are expected to become even higher this year. This year estimated support costs will run over $15 billion, compared with $11.9 billion last year. This is three times what was expected when the budget was originally prepared. Some observers even fear that the total could reach $18 billion. The cost estimates for the current fiscal year have not been substantially affected by the administration's new payment-in-kind program, in which farmers will be given surplus grain or cotton now in government-controlled storage if they leave up to half their cropland uncultivated.

The farm support program adds up to a lot of money, but farmers are an essential part of our national life, and if such a program were a must in order to sustain them, it would be worth every penny. But one of the most distressing things about the whole agricultural question is that the spending of all these billions has done little to ease the worst farm recession in fifty years. Part of the problem is the miracle of American farm productivity itself. Farmers make up just four percent of the U.S. population, but last year they produced record grain and cotton crops while exports declined. This increase in supply in turn depressed prices and evoked increased federal supports. Yet despite such payments U.S. farmers are currently facing their worst financial crisis since the Great Depression and the days of *The Grapes of Wrath*. The farm crisis of the twenties helped to bring on that Depression, and many people fear the current farm crunch will do the same thing.

What should be done? We have no sweeping, detailed agricultural blueprint to offer. But we do have the conviction that the nation has been going at the problem in all the wrong ways ever since the days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Under then-Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace the U.S. started to reduce supply by killing little pigs and plowing under cotton, thus raising farm income. Increasing the money return for hard-hit farmers at a time when corn was selling for thirteen cents a bushel was certainly a good idea; the fact remains, however, that this was done when millions of Americans did not have enough to eat. The same basic paradox exists today on a worldwide basis; the U.S. government pays farmers not to produce food while millions go to bed hungry every night and children grow up deficient in mind and body because of grossly inadequate diets. Correcting this imbalance would not be easy, and it would require international cooperation on a scale we have not yet attempted. But cannot we at least make a start at creating such a program, one that will help the U.S. farmers and the starving people of the world simultaneously?

Assessing the seventies

THE ME DECADE FALLACY

'DEMOCRATIZATION OF SELFHOOD'?

"Census Shows Gains in Jobs by Women and Blacks in the 70's." Thus the frontpage headline of April 24's *New York Times*. The good news came shortly before a national commission warned of a "tide of mediocrity" imperiling U.S. education. Well, not only have nearly half the nation's domestic servants moved in the last decade to better paying blue collar work, but between 1960 and 1980 the college student population grew from 3.2 million to more than 11 million — the increase in enrollment coming largely from minorities, working class, older people, and women. Which is one reason there were almost nine times more black women lawyers and psychologists in 1980 than there were back in 1970. Strains on the system, educational and other, were to be expected. After 1945, when thousands of working class students poured into aristocratic European universities, you heard the same complaints of deteriorating standards — so what else is new?

The decade of the seventies has had a lousy press — much of it as credible as a *National Enquirer* front page. The Me Decade (Tom Wolfe), a time of narcissism (Christopher Lasch), decadence (Jim Hougan), a period of political incoherence and reaction (Henry Fairlie) and the decline of all forms of authority (Richard Sennett, Daniel Bell). Fueled by a five-fold jump in the GNP between 1940 and 1960, the sixties generated expectant visions which, at least for intellectuals,

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events of the seventies — Vietnam, Watergate, and OPEC's economic squeeze — crushed. The future, we were told, appeared suddenly nasty, brutish, and short.

One might have thought that activist Americans could well use a respite of inward-turning. Certainly it was not without significance that hordes of us were renewing William James's search for varieties of religious experience. Instead, social critics for the most part deplored the smorgasbord of heterodox therapeutics the nation experimented with. Nor were they impressed by the fact that thirty million of us quit smoking. For critics on the left, apparently, we should have continued the crusades of the sixties; for the right it was that we failed to save, invest, and produce. Of course true believing Freudians have always preferred self-sacrificing Oedipal struggles to the idyls of Narcissus — though on what basis except that it's better for the economy of psychiatrists it's hard to say.

But there is no warrant whatever for depicting the seventies as politically inert. The politics of dissent did not fade when the New Left dissolved in its futile antipolitics of revolution; it proliferated. It was appropriated by thousands of unmeltable ethnics, welfare mothers, prisoners, gays and lesbians, gray panthers, the handicapped, feminists, consumers, environmentalists, born-again Christians, and big corporations. It's been messy, a balkanization of American politics some would say, and surely so many competing interest groups have strained the old pros of the system. But remember that most of these single-issue groups are composed of people who were only a short time ago invisible and ignored. Their political epiphany in the seventies represents, in part, the redemption of America's great promise of participation.

It's a promise which invites equivalent strain on the system for every gain in its realization. The decades of the sixties and seventies illustrate the inevitable trouble. Indeed, as Peter Clecak argues in his new book (*America's Search for the Ideal Self*, Oxford), these two decades show a remarkable continuity; they differ from the fifties precisely in that the classic American quest for self-fulfillment was, during these twenty years, extended to a broad spectrum of citizens previously trapped by poverty and negative cultural images. What we witness in them, Clecak maintains, is nothing short of a "demonstration of selfhood" — a real amplification of subjectivity which demanded and got social change. Enlarged psychic expectation is entwined with material and public expectations — of more goods and services, wider opportunities, adequate private space, beauty in public surroundings, more leisure, and richer cultural offerings. Selfishness and narcissism, he thinks, have been side-effects. I suspect Clecak is right — and the continuity goes back beyond the unsettling egalitarian vision of the founding fathers, back in fact to that biblical understanding whereby those who never could have made it into the pages of Homer except under the guise of farce — namely the lowly and forgotten — got treated with the high seriousness worthy of Ulysses and Penelope.

The seventies deserve a better image. The American revolution continued to move on during those years.

DAVID TOOLAN

(Father David Toolan, S.J., is assistant editor of Commonweal.)

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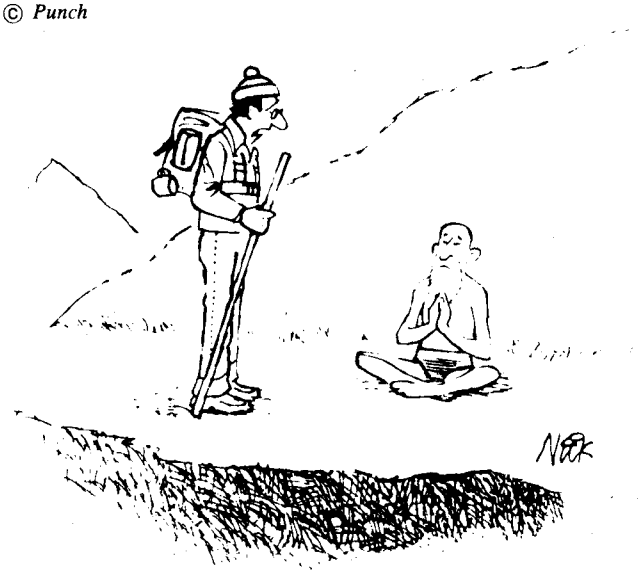

"That's it? Just a bowl of cherries?"

Washington report

THE SHADOW OF '84

WHY GOP SENATORS ARE FIDGETING

WORRIED Republican senators, looking over their shoulders at their colleagues' close races in 1982, and looking ahead to dismal forecasts for 1984, are rethinking their party-line voting and jumping off the presidential yacht — causing the White House in turn, once again to rethink its approach to the 1984 budget. Why, if you closed your eyes, with such election paranoia eighteen months ahead of schedule, you might think it was the House of Representatives. But open your eyes — it is the Senate; and the newest evidence of this campaign mood can be found in the Senate Budget Committee's consideration of the FY 1984 budget, where Committee Republicans have given up supporting the White House's dogmatic and unalterable positions.

The paranoia is real; a difference of 63,000 votes in five Senate races in 1982 would have given Bob Byrd back his title of majority leader. And that was when the numbers were in the Republicans' favor. In 1984, nineteen Republican Senate seats will be up for re-election and only fourteen Democratic. The core of the Republican leadership in the Senate is on the chopping block in 1984, including eight committee chairmen and the seats of the majority leader and the assistant majority leader. It's enough to make someone hear footsteps.

Majority Leader Baker is retiring, as is Democratic Senator

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Jennings Randolph. Baker's vacant seat is considered quite vulnerable to the likely Democratic nominee, Representative Albert Gore, while Randolph's vacancy is the only Democratic seat even thought to be targetable at the present time by Republicans—save for Senator Joseph Biden, Jr. of Delaware (and that only if challenged by Republican Governor Pierre S. du Pont IV). Yet on the Republican side, eight to nine incumbents are said to be in trouble and another five within Democratic range. It's no wonder that members of the Senate are behaving more and more like members of the House—both are constantly running for reelection. The traditional Senate protection, the six-year term, is being eroded by the decline of party structure and higher turnover of Senate incumbents.

Enter the Senate Budget Committee, starring a cast of Republicans in the majority: the same Republicans who masterfully carried through some of Ronald Reagan's biggest legislative victories over the past two years. When the voting was completed on the FY 84 budget, after a series of inexcusable

THE TENNYSON CURVE

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING . . .

DAVID R. CARLIN, JR.

POOR ARTHUR Laffer! Everyone laughs at him nowadays, as the curve of his reputation, having passed through its zenith, plunges toward the lower depths. It's unfair, of course, to place the blame for the theoretical side of Reaganomics on a single man, but Laffer and his celebrated curve (not to mention the restaurant napkin it was first drawn on) are such inviting targets that it's difficult to resist the temptation.

A few months ago, for instance, NBC News did an end-of the-year special titled "Reagan at Mid-Term," in which a cheerful Laffer, amid vignettes of encircling economic gloom, told us how optimistic he is about the state of the American economy. ("Just look at this smiling nitwit," NBC was suggesting.) On the same program Jude Wanniski, who tirelessly promoted Laffer and supply-side economics on the editorial pages of the *Wall Street Journal*, was permitted to appear in the dignified role of conservative critic of Reaganomics. Yet Wanniski is, if anything, more to blame for the Reaganomics fiasco than Laffer. But the *Journal* editor, though he may have thrown us a few curves, never drew one, never had one named after him. So Laffer has to take the heat. That's the way the world works.

But I'm not concerned here with the Laffer Curve for its own sake. What interests me is the fact that it's a sub-class of a more general curve long ago discovered by Alfred Lord Tennyson. We are still suffering the ill effects of the indiscriminate reaction against Victorianism that took place early in our century, when legions of healthy babies were thrown out amidst great quantities of sentimental bathwater. In erasing "Tears, idle tears" from their memory, our fathers and grandfathers forgot that Tennyson was one of the great social theorists of the nineteenth century, ranking only a few steps below Hegel, Marx, and Mill. So complete has the obliteration been that I haven't found a single contemporary reference to the Tennyson Curve, which once made such a stir in the world.

The principle was enunciated in the lines spoken by Arthur (not Arthur Laffer but Arthur the King) just before his death:

God fulfills Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

The idea here is that if you take any good practice (or "custom") and push it too far, you'll spoil it. For instance—and this is the Laffer sub-class of the Tennyson Curve—if you raise tax rates too high you'll undermine your tax base and ultimately diminish your tax returns. Unquestionably this has often happened in the course of human history—in the empires of the ancient world, for instance. But whether the point of over-taxation has already been reached in American society, as Laffer and friends assumed, is another question.

The Tennyson Curve has a hundred-and-one subclasses, all of them true. But the trick is to find the precise point at which they become true, the moment at which the downward phase of the curve begins. If corrective action is taken either too soon or too late, disaster ensues.

1. *The Newman Curve* (named after Cardinal Newman, author of *The Idea of a University*). Clever but not candid educators in need of funds have long palmed this pleasant fiction off on the public: that education is essentially a practical affair, that the fundamental aim of education is to make us all rich, both individually and collectively. The public, always enthusiastic for the practical, has responded by spending vast sums of money for colleges and universities. For a long time this strategy of deceit (a modern instance of Plato's "noble lie") worked, and schooling with a practical orientation actually succeeded in raising the world's educational level. But in America at least, we've entered the downward phase of the curve. So convinced is everyone that education ought to be practical and nothing but practical that it's nearly impossible nowadays to find an undergraduate foolish enough to study voluntarily anything so impractical as, say, history, literature, or philosophy. Hence the plan recently approved by the National Governors Conference as part of their high technology program: remove the few remaining academic humanists from America's colleges and universities and put them on a reservation—a kind of humanistic zoo—

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and wasteful delays attributed to the White House, the Democrats had a major victory, prevailing not only in numbers but in theory.

Only two votes could be found in the entire Budget Committee for Mr. Reagan's 10.3 percent increase in military spending—and nineteen votes against. Four of the five Republicans seeking reelection in 1984 further rebuffed the president by joining four other Republicans and nine Democrats to vote for a 5 percent increase in the defense budget.

while their old campuses are turned over to computer-literate engineers and MBAs who spend their weekends self-actualizing, preferably on ski slopes.

2. *The World Council of Churches Curve*. (In the nineteenth century it was known as the *Unitarian Curve*. In its Catholic variant it's the *Aggiornamento Curve*.) In order to make religion more attractive to the modern, secular consciousness, you drop its archaic trappings and redesign it in a rational, up-to-date fashion. Few curves, it seems, enter their downward phase so quickly as this one. The rule appears to be that the more nearly a church resembles the American Civil Liberties Union, the more likely it is to be empty.

3. *The Mumford Curve* (named for Lewis Mumford, who spent much of his career lamenting the suburbanization of America). Time was when the suburbs were lovely places, quiet villages nestled in the countryside, far but not too far from the madding crowd of city life. But the whole charm of the thing depended on the sparseness of suburban population. Once the crowds rushed in searching for that charm, it quite naturally vanished. Yogi Berra's famous remark about a certain St. Louis restaurant applies perfectly to the suburbs: "Nobody goes there anymore—it's too crowded."

4. *The Hugh Hefner Curve*. You start a magazine proclaiming that sex, so far from being dirty, isn't even serious; it's just good, clean fun. A few decades later you have massive abortions, vast numbers of illegitimate children born to teenagers from the poorest strata of society, and a delightful organization named the North American Man-Boy Love Association going on national TV to explain that your basic pedophile, contrary to the opinion of still-puritanical America, is not a pervert and child molester but rather a lonely boy's best friend, his protector and educator—a sort of latter-day equivalent of Father Flanagan. ("Oh, he's not heavy, darling, he's my Ganymede.")

5. *The Kaiser Wilhelm Curve*. Declaring your belief in peace through strength, you build up your armaments until you precipitate your own (and the world's) destruction. In some circles this is now called the *Ronald Reagan Curve*.

DAVID R. CARLIN, JR.

(David R. Carlin, Jr., a previous contributor, is a senator in the Rhode Island state legislature.)

Strange thing are happening on the right side of the aisle. Senators Chafee, Stafford, and Weicker, moderates who won by slim margins in 1982, joined Senators Mathias and Hatfield (who is up in 1984) to propose an alternative budget with increases in domestic programs, decreases in defense, and a repreal of the third-year tax cut and indexing. Their proposal entails a deficit of $27 billion less than the administration's.

The elections also had their impact on the other end of the Republican spectrum. Three conservative panel members held out against the White House pressure to compromise on taxes in order to muster a Republican majority on the Budget Committee; one, Senator Hatch, had a spirited race in 1982 and another, Senator Armstrong, faces the voters in 1984. As a result, backed by three fellow-Republicans, Budget Committee Chairman Pete Domenici, his own term up in 1984, joined with the committee's Democrats in calling for $30.2 billion additional, and unspecified, taxes for the 1984 fiscal year. This vote broke a week-long impasse and allowed a draft budget resolution to be sent to the floor by a vote of 13 to 4. Since this resolution was supported by only five of the panel's twelve Republicans, the Budget Committee for the Republican-controlled Senate had, in effect, reported out a Democratic budget.

The fifty-four Senate Republicans are well aware of the fragility of their majority, but at times it seems that the White House is not. Or at least this appears to be the case in two areas of particular concern to the eighteen Republicans who will be seeking reelection—defense and deficits.

President Reagan prevailed upon a reluctant Chairman Domenici to delay the Committee's consideration of the budget resolution for several weeks so that he could build up public support for his 10.3 percent defense spending increase. The delay was a considerable sacrifice for Domenici since as Budget Chairman, he was sensitive to the blame accorded the budget process for the confrontations and delays in appropriations during the last Congress. Moreover, given the resurgence of the New Mexico Democrats in the 1982 elections (fellow Republican Senator Harrison Schmitt was defeated by Democrat Jeff Bingaman), Mr. Domenici greatly needs the visibility of successful political leadership. Mr. Reagan had also apparently indicated that he wanted the time to develop some flexibility in the defense budget. Yet notwithstanding the president's failure to generate any appreciable support for his defense increase, he offered no compromise figure to Domenici that could be used to build a Republican coalition—hence, the Budget Committee's reduction of the president's increase to 5 percent.

Many Senate Republicans find that their constituents reflect the findings of the national polls on military spending (a March 28 Harris survey found 29 percent favoring a decrease in the defense budget and 54 percent for keeping it as it is now). A number of senators also report that their constituents have learned too well the oft-cited administration couplet, waste and inefficiency, used to justify deep cuts in domestic spending; they ask why it can't be applied to the Defense Department as well. It is this concern that prompted conservative Iowa

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Republican Charles Grassley to call for a freeze in defense spending; as a Budget Committee member he voted against the 5 percent increase because he thought the growth rate in defense spending too high.

The Budget Committee's refusal to go higher than a 5 percent defense increase has been characterized as the presidents's "biggest defeat on Capitol Hill." This may be a bit overstated. Fiscal 1980 military spending was $135.9 billion; fiscal 1983 defense outlays are estimated to be $214.2 billion—a 25.4 percent increase. Mr. Reagan has been very successful in getting Congress to increase military spending; but constituents are saying enough is enough. The president's unbudging request for significant further increases conflicts with a major concern among the electorate—one that the administration took great care to instill—the projection of higher deficits in the years to come, with their accompanying high interest rates and threats to economic recovery.

The administration's response to this concern over deficits has been another futile call for further cuts in domestic spending and a renewed threat by the president to veto any repeal of his third-year tax cut or of tax indexing—despite a fiscal '84 deficit of $208 billion. The most dramatic response was made by Defense Secretary Weinberger when he suggested that the president does not need a budget resolution to set the targets for congressional spending. Rather, he asserts that Mr. Reagan can veto any appropriation bill that exceeds his spending limit. Reflective of the party fragmentation elsewhere, fellow cabinet member Dave Stockman openly contested this tactic and provided the president with data (somehow leaked to the press) showing that Weinberger's strategy of confrontation would lead to a stalemate allowing spending to go on, despite the president's veto power, but without the discipline inherent in the budget process, and assuring $200 billion deficits "as far as the eye could see"—a prospect not relished by any incumbent in 1984, whether senator or president.

Secretary Weinberger's approach is but one of a series of assaults on the budget process. A Senate-established study group of former members James Pearson and Abraham Ribicoff has recently called for elimination of the Budget Committee and proposed that its duties be taken up by a shared subcommittee of the Senate Appropriation and Finance Committees. The tandem suggestions to jettison the Budget Committee are prompted, in the case of certain members of the administration, by belief that the budget process no longer serves their political ends, and in the case of certain members of the Senate, by resentment at how the administration has been able to use that process, and by the desire to insure that it not be used again either to cut their programs or further diminish their power.

Yet it is recognized by many in the Senate that the budget process is one of the few comprehensive policy-making tools available to Congress—where discipline can be imposed on a fiscal situation that cries out for a better balance between taxes and spending, especially in future years. The inability of the Senate Republicans, much less the White House, to strike such a balance reflects the conflict within the nation. Whether yanked by the anger of the unemployment-riddled Frostbelt or by the exasperation of the federally-plagued West, the Republican party is being stretched and pulled too far to cover the nation; and its seams are unraveling as a result.

Procedure and processes can be argued forever. The Budget Act will probably be debated until the nation's tricentennial. But the problem is that the country needs a budget now. For the FY 84 budget, Ronald Reagan's position has hardly been one of reconciliation. Angry, defeated, and skeptical, Reagan, at a meeting with Senate Budget Committee Republicans, defensively pleaded: "When are we going to have the guts to stand for what's right instead of what's popular?" You could sense the reply in the minds of Senate Republicans, eighteen of them in particular: "If we stand with the president now, will we have seats to sit on in 1985?

JEREMIAH BARUCH

Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

ANTI-SEMITISM REVISITED

A HANDBOOK ON CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS

COLUMNISTS appreciate reaction even when it is negative. How else are we to know whether anyone out there is reading what we write? Columnists, by definition, deal with opinion, but most of us base that opinion on study and research, come to our conclusions with some care, and try to articulate them with real labor and thought. We are freelance commentators on current events. We speak for ourselves. We do not, and cannot, take refuge behind the editorial "we." Each of us works hard to achieve an individual voice — a recognizable style.

For these reasons, perhaps, attacks on a columnist's opinions tend to be more personal than attacks on the faceless editorialists. It takes a bit of self-control not to spring to a counterattack, thus prolonging a possibly fruitless dialogue, and generating more heat than light. Not for the columnist is the privilege of the chaste "editorial note" with which an editor can correct a letter-writer's distortion of a writer's point — not unless that privilege is extended by the editors, as it sometimes is. The columnist hopes resignedly that the interested reader will turn back and read the column which evoked the letters. And moves on to other things.

Two recent events, however, have sent me back to the subject of my column

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in December — on the danger of resurgent anti-Semitism. One was the reunion of the Holocaust survivors held here in Washington. The other was the publication of a handbook, *Seminary Education and Christian-Jewish Relations*, issued by the seminary department of the National Catholic Educational Association (1 Dupont Circle 350 Washington, D.C. 20036), the department now under the direction of Monsignor William Baumgaertner. It is a curriculum and resource handbook which is an answer in part to the self-searching of Christians who, faced with the terrible stories told by the survivors, wondered what they could do to prevent another Holocaust, and how they could atone for the past.

Dr. Franklin Littell, professor of religion at Temple University, commenting on "the American Gathering" said that the Holocaust leads to a credibility crisis both for modern university education which produced "technically competent barbarians" and for Christians. "This monstrous crime was committed by baptized Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox Christians, none of them rebuked, let alone excommunicated." That is a strong statement, but the charge of Dr. John T. Pawlikowski, Catholic priest and professor of social ethics at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, is even more disturbing. He said that "traditional, primarily Christian anti-Semitism served as an indispensable seedbed for the popular acceptance of the Nazi genocidal plan."

In light of such painful acknowledgments the handbook is at the very least a basis for hope and a testimony to the slow and painful progress — but progress all the same — made since the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* ("On the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions") was issued by the Second Vatican Council in 1965. In it the Church condemned "hatreds, persecutions, and manifestations of anti-Semitism directed against Jews at any time and by anyone." In 1974 Pope Paul VI established the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews and, in his commentary on the guidelines issued at the time, Cardinal Willebrands, president of the Commission, noted that, although it was nine

years since the declaration had pointed the path to follow, there was still "a long road" ahead. The problem of Christian-Jewish relations concerns the church as such, he said, since it is when pondering her own mystery she encounters the mystery of Israel. Therefore, even in areas where no Jewish communities exist, this remains an important problem for Christians everywhere.

This importance was even more vividly stated in the American bishops' 1975 statement:

> Christians have not fully appreciated their Jewish roots. . . . Early in Christian history a de-Judaizing process dulled our awareness of our Jewish beginnings. The Jewishness of Jesus, of his mother, of the disciples, of the primitive church, was lost from view. That Jesus was called Rabbi; that He was born, lived and died under the Law; that He and Peter and Paul worshipped in the Temple — these facts were blurred by the controversy which alienated Christians from the Synagogue.

The same statement refers to the erroneous notions of many in the Christian past by which Jewish disasters, and by extension all Jewish suffering, came to be seen as a sign of Christ's triumph: "Much alienation between Christian and Jew found its origins in certain anti-Judaic theology which over the centuries has led not only to social friction with Jews but often to their oppression."

Over the centuries, as the seminary handbook points out, although it was never official church teaching, the charge of deicide had wide popular appeal because it was a rationalization for what seemed the embarrassing continued existence of the Jews after Christ, and allowed for the projection onto the Jews of our own sinful responsibility for the death of Jesus. "It was conveniently forgotten by many that only by assuming that awesome responsibility . . . are we as Christians enabled to rise with Him in glory."

Against this background Pope John Paul II's address to the Jews of Germany in 1982 propounds a beautiful, mysterious, and powerful teaching — a ground for renewal in the brotherhood of Christians and Jews. He said that the old covenant between God and the Jews had never been "retracted by God" and the dialogue with the Jews is always at the same time a dialogue *within* the church. The pope insists that the church must accept the *continuing and permanent election* of the Jewish people. He also insists, repeating the words of the German bishops, "Who meets Jesus Christ, meets Judaism."

The point of my previous column was that anti-Semitism is an ugly attitude, harmful to the minds which harbor it, and potentially dangerous and explosive within the body politic, — and it is that, even when "relatively mild" (to quote one of my correspondents). But the renewed teaching of the church on Christian-Jewish relations during the last twenty years, documented in the seminary handbook, makes it clear that anti-Semitism is more clearly our responsibility than other forms of prejudice, not only its growth in the past but because the mystery of redemption is tied to the mystery of Judaism. Jews are called to join in the dialogue — it cannot be a dialogue unless they respond — but, as the handbook states, since the fourth century the Christians, not Jews, have been in the position of power, "and thus in a position to abuse that power." It is we who must walk the extra miles.

The seminary handbook is a marvelous tool. It can be used for the ongoing work of the faculties and students of Catholic seminaries and in the context of the training for Christian ministry of all the churches, but it can also be used by all those of us who hope to come together in peace and love to right the wrongs of the past and present.

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

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Church/world watch

Mobilizing opinion, curbing technology

J. Bryan Hehir

BY THE TIME this column appears, the May 2-3 meeting of the Catholic bishops will have taken place, and the bishops will have acted, one way or another on the pastoral letter. Yet even as so much of our attention is given, quite rightly, to the letter, it is still very important to resist isolation of intramural Catholic debate from the wider public concern about the nuclear arms race. The pastoral letter has been guided by the spirit of Vatican II's "Constitution on the Church in the World"; this document calls us to be attentive to the church's relationship to the world and to what the church can learn from the world. The pastoral letter seeks to contribute to the wider debate and to learn from it. Two aspects of that wider debate provide lessons to be learned.

First, the relationship of public opinion and public policy. In his 1982 World Day of Peace message John Paul II identified the role of public opinion as crucial for arms control and as an arena particularly open to the church: "Rulers must be supported and enlightened by a public opinion which encourages them or, where necessary, expresses disapproval."

While this statement finds much support, the more difficult question has always been one of determining precisely the potential of public opinion to influence foreign policy decisions. The interplay between policy-making and public attitudes in a large democracy is complex enough in itself but analysts going back to Walter Lippmann have seen special problems when public opinion tries to influence foreign policy. Nonetheless, a broad consensus exists today that President Reagan's successive proposals on arms control—from the "zero option" of November 1981 through the START proposals of May 1982 to the recent "interim proposal" for the Geneva negotiations on intermediate-range weapons—have all been generated partially in response to strong public calls for a serious U.S. arms-control policy.

A more specific indication of the effect of public opinion on policy is visible in the defense posture statement presented to the Congress by Secretary Weinberger on February 1, 1983. This annual review of U.S. strategic and foreign policy is always a benchmark for assessing an administration's strategic intentions. Mr. Weinberger uses much of the nuclear section of his testimony to address three issues, all of them raised by groups in the public-opinion sector of society. First, as both the *Wall Street Journal* and *Washington Post* noted, he addressed the opposition of the bishops' second draft to any strategic policy which targets civilians directly. Second, Mr. Weinberger seeks to deflect the proposal of Messrs. Bundy, Kennan, McNamara, and Smith that NATO adopt a no-first-use pledge. Third, he seeks to counter the advocates of a nuclear freeze. My point in mentioning these examples is not to debate any of the proposals or the secretary's response to them, but to highlight the need he felt to address them in his major presentation to the Congress.

A second element in the public debate which ought to concern us was developed in the recent essay in *Time* by Henry Kissinger. (Much the same point is suggested by the report of the Snowcroft Commission, which was established by President Reagan to find a home for the MX but ended up making a thorough reassessment of U.S. strategic arms policy.) The thesis of Kissinger's intricate and important article is that the key challenge to arms control today is a conceptual one. In explaining why a new conceptual approach is needed, Kissinger touches on a favorite topic of John Paul II. The pope has consistently couched his discussion of the nuclear question in the broader terms of the relationship between technology and ethics. While positively supporting the role of science, John Paul II has repeatedly raised concern about how to establish moral limits for technological development.

Kissinger's concern is the way technology has outrun both strategic policy and ideas for arms control. The principal arms-control problem today is the disparity between numbers of warheads and launchers, a disparity produced by the decision both the U.S. and the Soviets took in the 1970s to deploy "MIRVed" missiles, i.e., to fit each missile with more than one warhead. Thus both sides may possess a roughly equal number of launchers (missiles) but the side that fires first suddenly translates its equal number of launchers into, say, three times or even ten times as many "bullets"—warheads—as the adversary has targets—the still unlaunched missiles. Since the likelihood of eliminating the opposing missiles is obviously much increased by this kind of ratio, in a crisis there would be a strong incentive to strike first. Moreover, the arms-control paradox is that reducing the numbers of launchers without significant reductions in warheads (à la SALT II) could reinforce this instability by increasing the ratio of warheads over targets that would be enjoyed by the power that struck first.

Kissinger's proposal amounts to a call to repeal the MIRV decision of the 1970s, preferably on a bilateral basis but unilaterally if necessary. Specifically, he calls for the U.S. to move in the 1990s toward a mobile land-based system of single warhead missiles. The full scope of the Kissinger proposal and the Snowcroft Commission report requires more comment in a later column.

The one point to be made here is that the Kissinger essay highlights the

(Continued on page 319)

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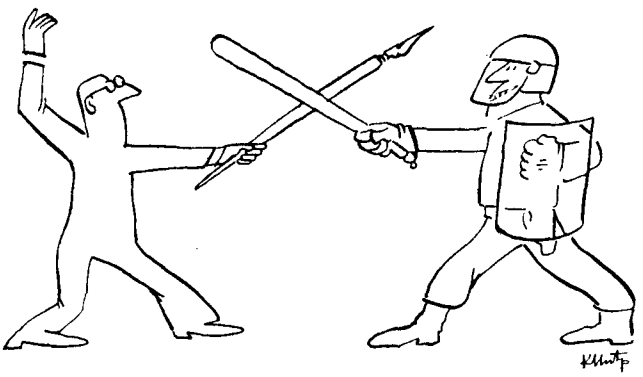

The defense of private decency

KEITH BURRIS

MOST PEOPLE know that Mr. George Orwell wrote a book called *1984* about a counter-utopian, oligarchical collective in which Big Brother is always watching, and the average citizen is always anxious, manipulated, and alone. Some of us use the term "Orwellian" to describe aspects of modern life which seem to us particularly abstract and dehumanizing. And we are dimly aware that next year will be the time when we celebrate Orwell's dark portrait and relentless warning. The first shot, however, was fired a year early with an essay by Mr. Norman Podhoretz in the January, 1983 edition of *Harper's* magazine. Podhoretz claims that if Orwell were alive today, he would be not a socialist (he had been a rather unfaithful and unorthodox one in his time), but that brand of American former socialists called neoconservatives. These are persons committed to competitive social justice, a welfare state of vigor but limited aspiration and power, and an extremely skeptical view of the USSR. Podhoretz was countered in the *New Republic* by contemporary American socialist Irving Howe. According to Howe, Orwell believed that socialism was inevitable and the only relevant question is whether or not it can become humane.

This sort of talk, and the discussions that will continue throughout this and next year in classrooms, in print, yes, even at cocktail parties and on radio call-in shows, is good. Though it may at times turn trivial, or partisan, "Orwell talk" helps us to focus upon the central political and social questions of this century. Even when he was too hopeless about the future, too sure about humanity's inherent distaste for freedom and civility, too angry to see ways out or away from destruction, he did see the world, the rich, amoral, and too often barbarous modern world, with clarity. Orwell saw that there is something about modern civilization that is out of control.

He saw that we had not assimilated the power and scope of technology. He understood that this kind of progress had far outstripped man's moral and reflective development. And he knew that such a situation would result in a natural tendency toward bigness and centralization. The direction of the world, Orwell knew, would be toward complexity, specialization, rationalization, and bureaucracy. Partly because of the times he lived in, which saw the rise and conquests of historical fascism and totalitarianism, and partly because of the sort of person he was, Orwell foresaw what G.K. Chesterton in an earlier time had called "the abolition of man." *1984* is a portrayal of just that. Anyone who sits down with the book and reads it seriously will think more than once about terming all that is bizarre or simply unpleasant in America "Orwellian." The book remains the most effective nightmare description ever written of the totality of absolute rule by the modern state.

The appetite of totalitarianism—control not only of actions, but of thoughts and emotions—is not portrayed better in any work of modern fiction or journalism. We ought also to remember that the book portrays life after the conquest of totalitarianism world-wide, and imagines what life would be like if the Stalins and Hitlers had won. Won not only (perhaps chiefly) on the battlefields, but through the acquiescence to and imitations of totalitarian assumptions and methods by democratic states.

ORWELL WAS a prophet all right, but not in the way people misuse and misunderstand the term today. His journalism was not, nor did he mean his fiction to be, a palm reading or a weather report. He was a prophet in the true sense of the Old Testament. Orwell was trying to help us see the labyrinths of the twentieth century and the temptation such a century would present. He was urging us to take precautions, to repent of our naiveté and our foolishness. He was not by temperament a modern man. Listen to this self-description:

> Outside my work the thing I care most about is gardening, especially vegetable gardening. I like English cookery and English beer, French red wines, Spanish white wines, Indian tea, strong tobacco, coal fires, candlelight, and comfortable chairs. I dislike big towns, noise, motor cars, the radio, tinned food, central heating and 'modern' furniture.

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It was not merely taste that made him a contemporary Jeremiah. As with Camus, Orwell understood that the stakes had been raised, and tragically, foolishly, made political. Though he never tells us in *1984* how things got so far, and we may reasonably doubt (hope?) that they could not, he *does* understand how they began. This is what Orwell wrote in 1940:

> Religious belief, in the form in which we had known it, had to be abandoned. . . . Consequently, there was a long period during which nearly every thinking man was in some sense a rebel, and usually a quite irresponsible rebel. Literature was largely the literature of revolt or of disintegration. Gibbon, Voltaire, Rousseau, Shelley, Byron, Dickens, Stendhal, Samuel Butler, Ibsen, Zola, Flaubert, Shaw, Joyce — in one way or another they are all of them destroyers, wreckers, saboteurs. For two hundred years we had sawed at the branch we were sitting on. And in the end, much more suddenly than anyone had foreseen, our efforts were rewarded, and down we came. But unfortunately there had been a little mistake. The thing at the bottom was not a bed of roses after all, it was a cesspool full of barbed wire.

What is to George Orwell's everlasting credit is his understanding that the modern world not only tends to concentrate power (invidious enough from the viewpoint of any democrat), but that it does so at the expense of privacy. Hence the totalitarian virus in our world is not only fed on the death of common public spaces and the joy of citizenship, but on the constant threats to the plain and sheltered dimension of life in which people work out their individuality, aspirations, and cares. Orwell's strength as a thinker and a writer sprang from his ordinary decency. Both words matter. In an era when men, especially intellectuals, were not satisfied with "bourgeois" happiness or the corny old civilities, he wrote a hair-raising story about what life would be like without either. He made prosaic domesticity seem poetic and common sense heroic.

According to Orwell's friend, the British novelist Anthony Powell, Orwell was in some ways rather stern and priggish. He apparently had trouble being non-serious, having fun, not feeling a sort of generalized, perhaps class-based guilt. This may explain the blackness and rage one finds in his novels, particularly *1984*. Some critics have complained in various ways that Orwell carried the sadism of The Party functionary, O'Brien, too far in the book, thus marring it. But it is not only what is in *1984* that is bothersome; what is lacking in the book may be its greatest flaw. In the face of Auschwitz and Buchenwald, one might reasonably, after all, imagine man's capacity for inhumanity to his fellows as virtually limitless. This part of the book was not as breathtaking as Orwell's lack of affirmation in it of even the slightest hope for return, renewal, and redemption. At the end of *1984*, the totalitarian circle closes: "a boot stamping on a human face forever." Man is doomed.

This lack of hope in Orwell is not evident in his journalism and essays. And, in fact, I think his essays are both of a higher quality of craftsmanship and humane sensibility. It was here that Orwell showed himself an artist and a man of fairness, empathy, and contradiction. In the novels, curiously, one sees the simplifying polemicist and his extreme lack of kindness.

ORWELL ACTED the role of the English empiricist at times and had little use for the German or French existentialist movements. While I am inclined to think his initial judgment about Jean-Paul Sartre (which was low) may become a more commonly accepted one, even in academic circles, there is in his reaction to these movements something of the crude positivist. His lack of, to use the term broadly, religious sensibility limited him as a creative writer and as a critic. He did not understand the work of Evelyn Waugh or Graham Greene, for example. This is probably, again, a lack of hope and humanity to balance an uncompromising view of man's evil.

And Orwell was wrong about capitalism going under, though right about centralization. He thought it would be the state exclusively that would limit our freedoms and it turns out that society itself has become bureaucratized. Orwell, if he were alive today, would make a worthy opponent for the multinational corporation. He could have made an idea and a book on "organization man" stand up and sing. Orwell would, I think, have opposed the American intervention in Vietnam, but would not have become an America-hater, and would have continued to cast a cold eye on the Russians.

I believe he was not finally a very astute political scientist. He took Marxist notions of class too seriously. He held a simple and romantic view of the working man. He hoped for a "liberal" socialism respectful of privacy and individual liberty. But he paid little attention to how such an arrangement might be guaranteed. American democracy has been threatened both by elite and mass fascist tendencies at various points in our history, and usually saved by constitutionalism. Old James Madison trusted neither worker nor intellectual, nor, alone, common sense. Orwell should have read him, when worrying about how to slow the totalitarian tide.

THERE ARE better books. Huxley was probably nearer the mark in some ways. Totalitarianism in America will not come by The Party and the boot, but out of excessive comfort, passivity, and indolence. Anthony Burgess wrote a book a few years ago that looked a good deal more like the end of the road the West is now heading down. And Burgess *does* have a

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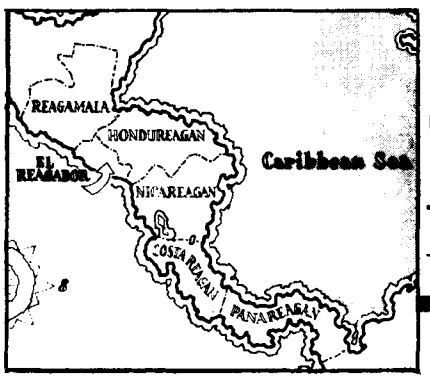
sense of humor and religion (are these related, I wonder?) But George Orwell understood first and best what the modern world would make of a society once it had lost its love of freedom and of the private simple joys old-fashioned liberty allowed men.

Orwell was the last of the Victorian liberals, the men who most valued clear thought, pure language, and individuality. He saw more clearly than any man in our century, the constant threat to personal liberty. He saw the totalitarian disease, not, perhaps, in all of its forms, but most definitely in all of its strength and persistence. If Hannah Arendt was the chronicler of totalitarianism who most clearly saw its destruction of the public and of the citizen, it was Orwell who saw most cogently its destruction of the private; the husband, father, friend, and finally, inner man. He was not a saint, secular or otherwise. But he did prophesy.

CAN WE HELP COSTA RICA INSTEAD OF ENTANGLING IT?



Central America's forgotten democracy

J.S. FUERST

GUATEMALA AND EL SALVADOR are constantly in the news because of their military struggles and authoritarian regimes, Nicaragua gets covered because of the fear of a Soviet-model takeover. Little attention, however, is devoted to Costa Rica, a solidly liberal democracy of two million people in Central America — a too-little known land with elections every four years, a Supreme Court like ours, a free press, and no army.Two-thirds of its people have lived above a poverty level. It has a well-educated and reliable work force, low birth rates, high life-expectancy (approximately seventy years), and literacy rates comparable to our own.

In last year's national election the Partido Liberacion Nacional (PLN) garnered 57 percent of the vote, the Partido Unidad 37 percent. The extreme left and right parties split 6 percent of the vote, with half to the Communists. In large part, this electoral result is related to the fact that Costa Rica is not divided solely into the very rich and very poor as is all too common in Latin America. Even the businessmen are part of a middle class, not a superwealthy one; there is a delicate balance between elitism and egalitarianism.

The country's main problem, not surprisingly, is the economy, over which hangs the serious consequences of Costa Rica's default on international payments. Industry represents only 24 percent of the gross national product, a deficiency the government is desperately trying to remedy. While the primary source of wealth is agriculture (Costa Rica is known as the "dessert country," thanks to its crops of cocoa, coffee, sugar and bananas, plus its production of milk), a much larger proportion of the land, primarily coffee and sugar plantations, is owned by small farmers than is true in other South and Central American countries.

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Nevertheless, the 70 percent inflation, the unemployment, the adverse balance of payments — with high prices for oil and continuing low prices for coffee — have resulted in huge trade deficits. Compounding this, of course, is the problem of the foreign debt, much of it generated when coffee was king and optimism, nationally and internationally, was high.

LAST YEAR, for example, no sooner had the new PLN government taken office (and embarked on an austerity program) than the price of the Costa Rican *colon* plummeted in world markets. It took several months and a trip to Washington as well as other foreign negotiations to bring the *colon* back to even a workable ratio. Today the outflow of middle-class capital which had intensified with the drop in the currency's value has been at least temporarily stopped.

Both during and after his campaign, the new PLN president of Costa Rica, Alberto Monge, had declared: "There can be no peace while there is hunger, and a first priority is a further improvement of the distribution of ownership of means of production in agriculture, industry, and trade." But even before Monge took office, Eduardo Lisano, a leading economist and one of the more influential figures in the new government, had warned, "Our people may have to go back to rice and beans for a short while, and middle- and upper-income families may have to curtail their vacations and their extras." In other words, for the short run, less investment will be made in consumer products for the domestic market and more in agriculture, industry, or anything that will produce foreign currency.

There are some cushions against this austerity. The extended family structure of Costa Rica means that most households, even if they have some unemployed, also have some members who work, so that people will not go hungry. Further, the family assistance program, combined with a food program in the schools that is extended to the unemployed, feeds masses of people. To soften the austerity program, the

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government plans to construct ten thousand houses for low- and moderate-income families which can provide jobs. Likewise, Costa Rica plans to use its unemployment fund as a source for more housing and for more jobs. The PLN is pushing ahead with the hydroelectric plant in Guanacaste, which will produce five thousand jobs. The plant will provide electric power for domestic use and for export to Nicaragua.

While the emphasis of the PLN is on better distribution of wealth, it is equally determined that extensive state enterprise is not the answer. State enterprise, the PLN believes, should be the exception rather than the rule, although it feels banking, insurance, oil refining, and utilities must be government owned. "Extensive government-owned enterprises in industries like cement too often become bureaucratic, inefficient, and arteriosclerotic," according to Oscar Arias Sanchez, PLN secretary-general. "Excessive paternalism encourages individual irresponsibility while it stimulates inertia by offering the vain hope that the state enterprise will solve all the problems." This, says the PLN leadership, has led to an excess of public spending which has become a significant factor in the inflation that Costa Rica is experiencing, though the crucial factors have been the high oil prices and low agricultural prices. According to Arias Sanchez, "Our aim in the future is to develop society rather than the state."

All the PLN leaders stress stimulation of trade unions and cooperatives as a keystone of the country's improvement. For the coming years, according to Padre Benjamin Nunez, one of the older and most respected leaders of the PLN, "we will allocate to the cooperative sector all that they can take in the way of expanding housing cooperatives, cooperative industry, consumer cooperative distribution schemes, and agricultural buying and merchandising co-ops." Rodolfo Navas Alvarado, head of the Cooperative Federation and of the Costa Rican youth movement, as well as a newly-elected member of the Costa Rican Congress (now its vice president) sees cooperative operations expanding in the medical field, in industry, transport, distribution, and in many other fields as a countermeasure to the overgrowth of bureaucratization. "In fact," says Alvarado, "the growth in cooperatives may well offer a counter offensive to the Reaganomics with which the U.S. wants to overwhelm us." Presently, twenty-five percent of the workers are members of one kind of cooperative or another, and cooperative enterprise represents 10 percent of the GNP except in the case of milk wholesaling, where it represents 35 percent. While Navas Alvarado would expand cooperatives to almost all fields, making it 20 percent of GNP within the next three years, Arias Sanchez and President Monge and others are inclined to give at least as much attention to attracting private capital, both domestic and foreign, which for the moment promises significant dividends and more immediate results. In short, the party seeks a healthy balance of forces: state ownership, cooperative ownership, and a substantial input of private capital. For them small enterprises — cooperatives and controlled private ones — are clearly superior to state capitalism.

Business and professional men with whom I spoke last year, such as a furniture-manufacturer, physicians, attorneys, and several store-owners, believe that they as well as the country will surmount the present economic difficulties. Luis Liberman, a consulting economist, discussed the great potential for more investment, foreign and domestic. For example, he said, "a family-owned company which we initiated several years ago exported $50,000 worth the first year, $1.5 million the second year, and the present projection is for $4 million." "When labor is as cheap as it is in Costa Rica, it's hard to fail if you have a good item." But more capital is needed, and of course the kind of trade concessions outlined in President Reagan's Caribbean Basin proposal, which Costa Rica welcomed even while recognizing that Congress might not pass it. Jose Figueres, founder and supporter of the PLN, himself three times president of Costa Rica, told me, "I know if I were an American labor leader I wouldn't seek it, but as a Costa Rican I know we need it; and because of the position of Costa Rica in Central America, in the long run, I think Reagan's proposal is in the American interest."

THE ONE THING we have not wanted to do, Arias Sanchez said to me, "is to promise more than we can deliver. Our biggest danger is the high expectations that people have." Actually, it is this caution as well as this long history of social responsibility and progressivism among the leaders of the PLN that allows them the necessary latitude to retrench without serious reaction. But even they recognize that they are on a short leash, and that if things do not start looking up soon, they may forfeit public support. At the time of PLN's election victory, even Figueres commented wryly, "Although people hate Carrazo [Monge's predecessor as president] now, in six months they may be saying things were not so bad under Carrazo."

To some extent this has come to pass. The capital outflow of the last few years should be attributed more to political unrest in the neighboring countries than lack of potential within Costa Rica itself. Nevertheless, despite the willingness of many local capitalists to bet their own money and business on the success of the PLN, they also want to hedge those bets a little.

There have been some significant strikes in the banana industry and some unrest at the university, where expenditures for faculty and students have been curtailed. Since things appear to be declining rather than improving, one might think that left wing (PVP) Partido Vanguardia Popular leaders Mora and Fereto have a "*terreño abandonado.*"

Nevertheless there are no revolutions on the horizon; the political unrest remains manageable. The main fact about Costa Rica has been its political stability — and such stability is not an ephemeral thing. As early as 1907 Fernando Garcia wrote about Costa Rica:

> Costa Rica has been without anything worthy of the name of revolution for fifteen years. There have been several attempts to overthrow the government which thanks to an efficient police force were cut down in a single day with no loss of life. . . . The country has always supported more school teachers than soldiers.

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. . . Costa Rica is fortunate in having an industrious and frugal middle class of small farmers who own land, horses, and oxen. . . . If all the Latin American countries were as peaceful and progressive as little Costa Rica they would soon lose their evil fame.

Today the Costa Ricans retain this fierce devotion to democratic principles.

NICARAGUA HAS BECOME a crucial factor in Costa Rica's future. The attitude of influential Costa Ricans toward developments in Nicaragua is significant. Clearly, almost all Costa Ricans, from former President Figueres on down, abominated Somoza and strongly disagreed with the U.S. position on Nicaragua. Currently, attitudes vary from those who more or less support the Sandinistas to those who qualify their previous support with concern that Nicaragua seems to be heading in the Soviet direction.

For example, when I asked Figueres how he felt about Nicaragua he said, "Things change very fast," Then he looked at his watch and said, "At 12:15 pm today this is what I believe. . . ."

Figueres and many young Costa Ricans like Rodolfo Navas Alvarado recognize that "there are forces among the Sandinistas that are interested in a more authoritarian type of government than Costa Rica can stomach. It is, in fact, because of these forces that liberal groups from Costa Rica and the U.S. must offer strong help and support, to strengthen the hand of the moderate-to-left group whose attitudes are similar to those of the PLN."

Nevertheless, a review of the Costa Rican position would indicate more than a little uneasiness. If one were to distill a consensus, it would probably be close to that expressed by Arias Sanchez, who, while indicating that uneasiness, said, "One, Nicaragua must be allowed to have whatever kind of government it wishes; two, Costa Rica must continue to trade with, and have good relations with, Nicaragua; and three, under no circumstances will Costa Rica allow itself to be used as a military or hostile base for anti-Sandinist or anti-Nicaraguan propaganda."

During the last six months, the U.S. has intensified its anti-Nicaraguan campaign and has made extensive efforts to push Monge and Costa Rica into an anti-Nicaraguan stance. This urging was the background music for the invitations to Monge to visit Washington and the visits by Regan and Shultz to Costa Rica.

The fact is that Costa Rica is itself on a hot seat. It desperately needs the credits offered by the U.S. and by the International Monetary Fund, and Costa Rican leaders are not, in any case, in complete sympathy with the stand taken by the Nicaraguan junta. On the other hand Costa Ricans recognize that to be anti-Nicaraguan and obtain credits from the U.S. may mean playing ball with the CIA and with Somosistas, a group that Costa Ricans of all shades abhor.

Of course Costa Rica's position is made more delicate by the fact that in the Reagan camp there seems to be no middle way. While the Reagan administration works closely with Mitterrand, trades with Yugoslavia, palavers with China, and assists Hungary to get extended loans from the IMF, no such beneficent gestures are available to Nicaragua or to countries that could help her. This makes Costa Rica's path most difficult since most Costa Ricans recognize that the Costa Rican-Nicaraguan ties, as neighbors and long-time trading partners, are strong.

What makes the problem worse, is that the normal economic belt-tightening which the Costa Ricans must do if they are to strengthen the *colon* as well as their economy, is bound to cause some unrest. If this unrest is accelerated by increased police or military activity directed at left-wing groups, the long vaunted stability even of Costa Rica can be threatened.

There is some evidence that Monge has accepted U.S. offers of police and counter-insurgency training against potential terrorist activity. Recently there were complaints of government interference with the circulation of a left-wing journal,an ordinary event elsewhere in Latin America but not in Costa Rica, where Communist journals are freely distributed. Accordingly, some left-wing members of the PLN are growing uneasy. But on the whole the orientation of the PLN, including that of Monge, has been far too close to the Socialist International to consider any of this domestic activity a dangerous swing to the right.

Purely and simply the U.S., or at least the present administration, has not recognized that Costa Rica, as a strong democratic state with socialist leanings, does represent a third way in the massive struggle between the Cuban-Soviet axis, and Western-style capitalism. If the U.S. wants to secure stability and friendship in Central America, its best investment would be maintaining the regional role of Costa Rica, not through armaments and anti-Sandinista policies, but with economic aid that supports the belief of two million Costa Ricans that they are going to make it in their own way.

In the course of his recent speech assailing Nicaragua and urging more military aid for El Salvador, Ronald Reagan also seemed to embrace Costa Rica as his ideal of a Central American democracy. His references indicate how desperately we need to understand exactly what Costa Rica is and where it stands. If President Reagan believes so fervently in Costa Rica, there are many economic concessions and measures of financial assistance that he could offer that nation — and that would really bolster democracy. So far, his assistance to Costa Rica in this area has been minimal. Can it be that the State Department and Mr. Reagan recognize that the Costa Rican democracy is also a genuine believer in non-participation in the Nicaraguan struggle? And that Costa Rica's government leaders are long-time members of the Socialist International (along with leaders in France, Spain, Scandinavia, etc.), and like the SI are unwilling to follow Washington's lead in casting every third-world struggle in East-West terms?

—J.S. Fuerst

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Screen

SHEIK, RATTLE, & ROLE

ROMANCE & DISILLUSIONMENT

I LIKE THE idea of John Sayles a lot. That a young writer with a passion for movies would make his own, working within whatever budget he could raise (on his first feature, that was only $60,000), appeals to me. Here are shades of Jean-Luc Godard, an *auteur* with a vision so compelling, at least to him, that he needs nothing to make a movie except his own energy and exuberance. The only problem I have with this conception of Sayles is that I haven't particularly liked the movies. Until the release of his current film, *Baby, It's You*, the *idea* of John Sayles has been more attractive than the reality. The new movie makes me take Sayles himself as seriously as the idea, though.

If you're going to make a movie on a ridiculously low budget, you ought to get something special for your trouble. It should be a work of great originality, as Godard's *Breathless* was, since originality is all it will have going for it. I had some doubts whether Sayles's first film, *The Return of the Secaucus 7*, was really worth the effort. There were moments of brightness and pathos in the dialogue, but the movie seemed to be trying to get by on dialogue alone. What was the point of doing this material as a movie instead of a play, or another novel, where Sayles could have achieved the acute observation of which he appeared incapable with a camera? Except for a series of inconclusive conversations among some old friends, nothing happens in *Return*. Nor is anything going on cinematically. When Godard made *Breathless*, he was bursting with new ideas about camera work and editing. They were what the movie was about. They were the excitement, the action. But *Return* seemed to lack that kind of interest in moviemaking *per se*. Having only the most static of situations to show, Sayles filmed them in the most conventional and invariable of ways. Far from turning his low budget and independence into an advantage, he seemed to regret not being able to do the film as more standard fare.

His second film, *Lianna*, doesn't seem to be much of an improvement in this regard. Sayles's apprenticeship in movies was on screenplays like *Piranha* and *Battle Beyond the Stars* for quickie producer Roger Corman, from whom Sayles learned the basic grammar, and much of the cliché rhetoric, of filmmaking. This doesn't serve him well in the lesbian seduction that is *Lianna*'s central theme. The balance of the film explores this scene's repercussions, and the further out the ripples go, the subtler and more engaging Sayles's observations are. The movie is best when showing us how the woman's children are affected, or how the football-coach husband of her best friend is. These are moments of poignant comedy. As well imagined as any among them is a scene where a filmmaker and resident ladykiller, played by Sayles himself, makes a pass at Lianna because she's left her husband.

To succeed fully, however, *Lianna* needs a seduction scene as human and amusing as Sayles wants the rest of his movie to be. He needs to risk in the filmmaking a kind of clumsiness and explicitness that the seduction itself has for the title character. What he creates instead is a slick, backlit, softcore scene that looks as if it might have been directed by the horny filmmaker he is playing in his movie. The film as a whole demands a scene that will draw us inside these two women's relationship, that will make us sympathize with their sexuality, make us feel their affection. We are given, instead, a scene as impersonal and chilly as the atmospheric blue light in which it is shot.

Baby, It's You contains a scene of lovemaking between a boy and a girl that is very similar in execution. The girl is Jill (Roseanna Arquette), and the boy is "the Sheik" (Vincent Spano). Although their backgrounds make them very different — she's a princess from a middle-class Jewish family, he's a "greaser" from working-class Italians — they dated in high school. They have gone their separate ways since then. She's at Sarah Lawrence, while he's washing dishes in a Miami club trying to break into show biz. Yet now they are meeting again in his dingy rented room in Miami, making love as if it were some urgent, unfinished business between them. This scene works, where the one in *Lianna* doesn't, because Sayles doesn't want to draw us inside his characters' relationship here. He wants us to remain dubious, to see through the erotic romance that his treatment of the scene represents. *Baby* is in general a more successful film because it is not about romance and disillusionment, but rather the reverse — about how disillusionments can lead into a romance instead of away from one. This theme works better for Sayles because it allows him to stand aloof from his own, conventional style of moviemaking. The style of the film doesn't ask us to make a commitment to the characters. The commitment lies elsewhere.

From the first time that Sheik tries to pick up Jill in the school cafeteria, almost every scene between them ends in irritation, dismay, a rebuff. He pesters her to go out with him, lurks in the corridor outside her classroom, comes to her rehearsal at the drama club and makes her blow her lines. But then when she does go out with him, he takes her to a bar where he ignores her all evening, sitting at a separate table shooting the bull with his buddies. Her demurs and his machismo are both so transparent, such juvenile poses, that we can't help taking an indulgent attitude toward these two kids. They have so little in common, and seem so intent on disappointing one another, that we begin to wonder what keeps bringing each back for more. In between the scenes, something must be going on in each that compels them to put up with all the pain and embarrassment they cause each other. What can it be? What will be left once the teenage role-playing has been abandoned and the immature feelings left behind?

Just before their senior prom, Sheik is thrown out of school. This leaves their relationship in a state of suspended animation, and her experiences her first year at college offer a strange parallel, a kind of repetition in counterpoint, to those of her last year in high school. She goes on a double date to a

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bar, as she did with Sheik the year before, for instance; but this time she gets drunk and dominates the conversation, as if she were reacting less to present company than to her memory of him — as if she wanted to make sure she weren't ignored again. Finally, she throws up. Where he was the one who always lost his cool before, now it's her turn.

This is generally true of her years at Sarah Lawrence. Her binge in Miami making love with him doesn't resolve their unfinished relationship either, as the specious rendering that Sayles gives the scene might indicate. Their lust is just another of those experiences they have to get through in order to get to whatever it is that has held them together against all teenage odds. At last amidst the wreckage of their respective dreams — his failure to break into show business in Miami, and hers to make her mark at Sarah Lawrence — they are re-united on the eve of another prom. This time they're ready for the *célébration de passage* a prom is supposed to be. We never believe that this resolution of their love will last longer than this one moment; but it is a sweet, romantic moment just the same.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

Books: OTHER VOICES, OTHER AMERICAS

BLUE HIGHWAYS

William Least Heat Moon
Atlantic/Little Brown, $17.50, 412 pp.

IN THE SPIRIT OF CRAZY HORSE

Peter Matthiessen
Viking, $20.95, 628 pp.

SMOOTHING THE GROUND

Essays on Native American Oral Literature

Edited by Brian Swann
California, $24.95, 364 pp.

Stephen Darst

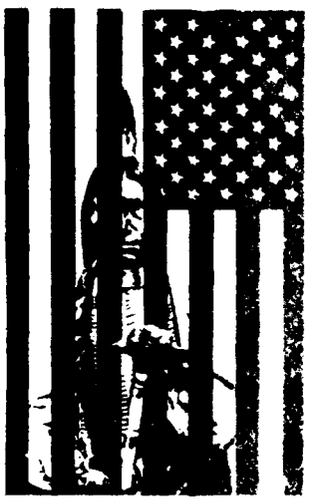
Bette S. Weidman

IT MIGHT seem the easiest way to encapsulate an entire continent and generations of history: trek the roads with tape recorder, notebook, map, jotting stray notes, snatches of conversation, evocative misty glimpses; attach these to a framework, slap between covers. *Voilà* (as Tensing de Tocqueville, your faithful French Sherpa, might say): a "masterpiece of Americana."

Seemingly easy; actually as tough a literary "trick" as any. Skulls of distinguished reporter-writers spook the trails north, south, east, west. In the last few years alone, one can recall doomed expeditions by Richard Reeves, one of the most original political reporters extant, and Eugene J. McCarthy, a public figure of even-greater originality, whose abandoned wagons were found with bones of Smith-Coronas and Pearlcorders devoured by buzzards. McCarthy confided to a reporter several years ago that his imitation of Tocqueville, coming approximately one-hundred-and-fifty years after the original, had turned out badly.

"It seemed like a good idea," McCarthy said in his laconic way, "but it wasn't."

"The Reeves Party" of last year fared little better. Nor was John Steinbeck's *Travels With Charley* of several years before that a great success.



All of which suggests the dimensions of William Least Heat Moon's accomplishment in *Blue Highways: A Journey into America*. Perhaps one of the reasons Moon has succeeded so signally where others have faltered is that he started his journey so lightly encumbered with possessions, literary, philosophical, or material. Only copies of Whitman and Black Elk, and a broken-down pick-up with makeshift bunk. No Charley, no Tocqueville. Moon kept to the backroads, the highways colored blue on old maps. Hence, the title. Hence, one suspects, part of the reason for his success.

Another reason was Moon's talent for simply keeping all senses alert. His book is the work of a fine writer, but it is equally the product of old-fashioned gum-shoeing, hard-news reporting, beating the bushes, following down that last mile of road, seeking out the final witness. Indeed, it is only in those stray

(Continued on page 312)

BOTH of these books offer contemporary approaches to the understanding of Native American cultures, and though they are very different, both indicate that despite moral and intellectual difficulties, such understanding is more than merely valuable: it is central to the definition of American culture as we hope someday to know it.

Peter Matthiessen's *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse* reconstructs the events of one day, June 26, 1975, when a shoot-out ending in the deaths of one Indian and two FBI agents took place on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. But in order to make sense of the event, to penetrate its unresolved mystery, Matthiessen centers his six-chapter account of June 26 (and the investigation and trials that followed) between two other bodies of material: Book I, a six-chapter summary of the history of controversy over the Black Hills, the development of the American Indian Movement, its early demonstrations at Alcatraz and Wounded Knee, and the conditions on Pine Ridge Reservation in the mid-1970s; and Book

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III, a seven-chapter account of the prison life of Leonard Peltier (convicted of the murder of the agents), the invasion of the Black Hills by coal and uranium interests, the discrediting of FBI testimony and treatment of witnesses, and Matthiessen's own reconstruction of the events of June 26, ending with a memorial service for murdered Indians held in the Black Hills on June 26, 1976.

In his introduction the writer invests the landscape of the Great Plains with historical meaning and locates spokesmen within it — Lame Deer, Frank Fools Crow, Joe Flying By, Sidney Keith, Leonard Crow Dog, Pete Catches. This gives Native Americans their own substantial voice in the book and a clear relation, sometimes an actual blood relation, between these contemporary speakers and the remarkable Sioux of the nineteenth century — Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, Red Cloud, Black Elk. The introduction also establishes the first-person relationship of Matthiessen to his material. Though Books I, II, and much of III are unfolded as reportage without the active "I," that "I" returns to us in the last four chapters, assuming full authority for the point of view that asserts the innocence of Leonard Peltier.

This returning voice of the author is the most remarkable element of the book. Its presence at the opening, is tremendously useful, for it is the voice of an artist, whose reportage is graced by imaginative understanding. The artist is able to take in sightings of an ominous mythic figure — the Big Man, or Brown Earth Man, or *rugaru* — whose appearances at the edge of the Indian communities are said to foretell disaster. His ability to comprehend these reports, to make them an understated *leitmotif* of the book, shows an "I" which is neither naive nor sophisticated, but *whole*. Matthiessen sees what is before him in the physical world and in the world of the human spirit as well.

He is writing in one of the great American traditions, the European-American counterpart to the American Indian tradition of powerful oratory. While Matthiessen himself acknowledges Helen Hunt Jackson, whose *A Century of Dishonor* is a landmark of the 1880s, the tradition in which he is writing goes back to the sixteenth-century Spanish priest, Bartolomé de las Casas, who presented formal argument before the Spanish Crown on behalf of the humanity of enslaved Indians. They are precious few, but there has been a writer like this in almost every generation and their truth is cumulative; it shows the way. In the twentieth century, they have been joined by Native American writers with roots in the oral tradition of their own peoples. I am thinking particularly of D'Arcy McNickle's *Native American Tribalism* (Oxford, 1973). Now Matthiessen adds his voice to these ranks with a book that is modest (no detail too small for his scrutiny), yet ambitious (not just the story of one man, but a story of the survival of the Plains people and their landscape).

Will Matthiessen and Leonard Peltier be able to talk to each other when they meet? Is there a language that the white writer and the Native American political activist share? The language of their encounter is English — but Peltier and Matthiessen understand one another not just because they speak the same language, but because they have a mutual understanding of the forms of speech. They understand legal, prophetic, historical, conscience *forms;* both can reach back into the verbal traditions of their peoples for a way of speaking.

Until we understand and share a range of verbal forms with those of another culture, we don't fully grasp its meanings. Full communication between cultures in social and political life may rest, then, on the kind of effort represented by *Smoothing the Ground*. This anthology of essays by eighteen scholars and critics, describing the oral literature of at least four centuries, is the first book to draw together recent work in a very exciting field. Here is a brief summary of some high points.

Dennis Tedlock offers a review of Zuni literature collected by ethnologists since the late nineteenth century, noting their intrusions of moralistic passages and their elimination of stylistic devices such as parallelism in joining of sentences. Collected by those looking for factual material, the tales suffer from anaesthetic retelling in which the imagination of the ethnologist displaces the traditional responsive audience. Tedlock calls for new collections of tales with attention to *speaking* style: phonological distortions, length of phrases, choice of words that are archaic or onomatopoeic. He recommends attention to voice quality, volume and pausing, paralinguistic features the tape recorder can assist us to observe. His own work, *Finding the Center: Narrative Poetry of the Zuni Indians* (Dial, 1972) is evidence that Zuni tales are narrative poetry, not prose. Recorders have failed to pay sufficient attention to *genre*.

Once Tedlock's method has established a text, then John Bierhorst tells us that literary criticism, based on explication, can be of great assistance. His own example of exploring a portion of the myth of Quetzalcoatl, recorded by Sahagún in the sixteenth century, makes use of ethnography, internal evidence, and native criticism in the form of variants.

Karl Kroeber finds a radical difference between European and Native American poetry. His discussion is unique for its unwillingness to rush into translation before examing the text itself and its ceremonial context. Kroeber shows how the Indian poem, in a Nez Percé example, does not grow out of a tension between the singer and his society, but becomes a poem by virtue of its entrance into public performance. Poetic images in non-European poetry serve "efficacies of another kind." For instance, in an Ojibwa deer-dancing poem; "the song works to keep a balance of energy not just in literature, not just in culture, but throughout the world: life-power moves through dream to song to ceremony to the hunt sustaining life through death."

The riches of Indian culture are represented here in three especially noteworthy essays. Jarold Ramsey's discussion of the Wasco Chinook tale, "The Hunter Who Had an Elk for a Guardian Spirit," is a model of discussion for stories without native language texts for which we have translations. Equally rich is Paul Zolbrod's essay on the Navaho chants recorded by a nineteenth-century army surgeon, Washington Matthews.

As full of promise as these two enter-

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prises are, they rest on incompletely known texts. The most exciting essay in the book is the triumphant recovery of an original-language story, a Clackamas Chinook myth told by Victoria Howard to Melville Jacobs, anthropologist and linguist, in 1929. Mrs. Howard, one of two remaining speakers of Clackamas Chinook, had absorbed myths and tales from her mother and grandmother. She died in 1930, and her words remained in phonetic transcription in Jacobs's notebooks for twenty-eight years, until Indiana University published two volumes of texts in 1958 and 1959. Now Dell Hymes, reexamining these volumes with the eye of a scholar and the ear of a poet, has made the tremendous discovery that, although Jacobs translated the stories into literal prose, he overlooked the linguistic markers Mrs. Howard used to structure her story. Re-analyzing her texts and others, Hymes has demonstrated that lines, verses,and stanzas are the appropriate divisions of oral narrative, in short that Mrs. Howard was practicing the craft of poetry.

Hymes gives us his analysis of one of Mrs. Howard's Grizzly Woman myths, presenting four scenes in a specially designed typeface called "Syntax Phonetic." This beautifully handsome typeface allows us to see and pronounce the original language and to compare Hymes's numbered-line translation, which is preceded by an analysis of structure. Hymes's working analysis is less devoted to interpretation than to observation of the way the text moves. His discussion brings out the several views of women figures in the story, from the bear-like ogress to the ideal wife. He justly remarks "Perhaps only a woman would have performed a story in which a woman so perfectly unites feminine decorum and sexuality, male strength and spiritual authority."

A reader can only rejoice that more Grizzly Woman stories will soon be published in a book called *Bears That Save and Destroy*. All three of the people — the teller, Victoria Howard, the recorder, Melville Jacobs, the restorer and translator, Dell Hymes — should be declared national treasures! Only such knowledge can save us from the destructive mindlessness of racism and greed, the forces that would rape the Black Hills, and, if Peter Matthiessen is right, consign objectors to the penitentiary.

An adventure of the unthinkable

THE BIRTH OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ANTARCTICA

John Calvin Batchelor

Dial, $16.95, 401 pp.

Clara Clairborne Park

INSATIABLY we hunger for stories. If the novelists called "serious" don't give them to us, we still find ways to support a habit too ingrained to kick. Some read detective stories. Some read history thrillers. Some read trash. Every few years a really good story comes along that we can read in the old voracious way — Mary Renault's early novels, Golding (remember *Lord of the Flies?*) and Tolkien, more recently *Watership Down* and *Riddley Walker*. I think *The Birth of the People's Republic of Antarctica* may be next.

It is a gripping adventure story, and very cannily told, though we are not bedeviled with flashbacks or the currently fashionable Chinese-box construction. Events occur chronologically. There is a single narrator whom we have no reason to distrust. The old methods still work splendidly, however: uncertainties, discoveries, information withheld, hinted, foreshadowed, even on occasion prophesied. The story is set in the imminent future, the years our children will inherit; by 2009 it is largely over. Batchelor's half-American narrator — and hero — was born in Sweden in 1973 in the backwash of Vietnam, raised in the marginal subculture of American draft-resisters who never went home, an outsider from the start. "If you step out of bounds just once," one of his mentors tells him, "you can't get back in." Batchelor's vision of the future is of an Age of Exile in which the human condition has become the subhuman condition of the refugee. He has not troubled to imagine nuclear holocaust; technology, since the Middle Eastern Wars of the late eighties cut the oil supply to a trickle, has gone backward rather than forward. Man has no need of science to render life brutish, short, and merciless. The fault is in ourselves, not our tools. Look round us, Batchelor seems to say: consider the boat people, consider those who must live and breed and sicken and die in refugee and prison camps; consider all those who today exist outside the bounds of our privileged attention. There is the future.

Imagine, then, the advanced societies reduced to a subsistence economy, with the predictable result when too many compete for too little. There are pogroms and disease, "millions starving as winter approached, crucifixions commonplace." Those who can, flee and join the Fleet of the Damned. Batchelor's narrator does not tell us — does not really know — what may be going on in the Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia in the years after he escapes with his family from burning Stockholm. We are allowed to posit some sort of compromised recovery — at the expense of whole populations who take to the seas, to die by storm or plague or starvation or pirates as desperate as themselves, or to attain the icy horrors of Antarctic concentration camps maintained through the International Ice Cross to salve the collective bad conscience of mankind. The novel's concern is not with the center but the margins, those outside who can't get back in.

It is a serious theme, but what keeps us reading through this chronicle of the unthinkable are the immemorial pleasures of adventure stories — weather, geography, suspense. Once the story gets going there's a surprise on almost every page. The hero, Grim Fiddle (Batchelor's names tend to the pointlessly inventive), reaches South Georgia in (yes) the Falklands, gets a son, becomes a leader — enough of summary. I earnestly adjure you not to read the jacket copy, which commits the unforgivable sin of answering a question the narrative itself has no intention of answering until page 351. Enough to say that Grim Fiddle is,

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as he tells us, not a David, not a Moses, certainly not a Christ as some think, not even quite a Beowulf, though Scripture and saga pervade his tale. He must enact the familiar lesson, that power corrupts, becoming a more terrible kind of outlaw than he is already: "an outlaw from my own heart."

Batchelor's tale is morally far more complex than Tolkien's saga, a tale of sin, pride, the hardening of hearts, of good and evil mixed. Its interior dimensions are ambitious, but these, unlike its absorbing story, offer no revelations. Though Grim ceaselessly and explicitly questions his nature and that of the novel's huge cast of characters, such discursiveness does not serve to establish the conviction that Russell Hoban achieves in *Riddley Walker* at once by the touching discord between the debased language and the subtle consciousness of Riddley, his post-holocaust hero. The characters remain unrealized, often merely names. Grim's packed narrative leaves little time for human relationships, and though this failure of love is part of the substance of Grim's confession, it restricts the novelist's achievement even more than the narrator's. Both call upon us for a kind of caring the story hasn't earned.

There's lots of room for political philosophy, though — including a whole chapter on utilitarianism. Grim's own heart-wisdom is similarly explicit, a salutary and continual affirmation of the eternal verities: that "the most terrible of lives is a gift for which we should be grateful," that "it is not possible . . . to rule innocently," that "truth can be smeared, can be interred, yet perhaps it cannot be erased," that "what men have done wrong, men can do right." This is high moral ground, and not unfamiliar. Reading generations are short, however, and moral ground should be plowed yearly. The Tolkien generation is gone with adolescence, and the current one seems to be asking a less simple-minded opposition of black hats versus white. This novel of adventure is also a novel of ideas and truths. Those who are young enough not to have read much will experience it as profound — indeed, why condescend? For them, it will be profound. For all ages it's a very good read, and something more.

God revealing in symbol

MODELS OF REVELATION

Avery Dulles
Doubleday, $16.95, $360 pp.

Bernard Cooke

USING the technique of "models" which he successfully employed in his *Models of the Church*, Avery Dulles is able in his newest book to bring into coherent synthesis most of modern theological reflection about divine revelation. The careful reader of *Models of Revelation* should come away with an objective and structured knowledge of recent opinions about the nature of revelation and of Dulles's own careful evaluation of these opinions.

"Revelation" is, of course, one of those central elements of Christian belief which involve everything else. For that reason, any adequate treatment of the topic must take into account Christology, ecclesiology, theologies of faith and grace, eschatology — as well as a range of philosophical and social scientific issues. Dulles is equal to the task. This book never loses its focus, the process of divine communication with humans, but it examines this process in the concrete context of God's revelation in Jesus as the Christ and the continuation of this in the revealing existence of the church.

Dulles organizes his presentation around five models: revelation as doctrine, as history, as inner experience, as dialectical presence, as new awareness. Though he recognizes the arbitrariness at times in assigning various thinkers to this or that particular model, he is able with considerable objectivity to present most of the important views about revelation within this structure. This gives him, moreover, a manageable framework within which to organize his evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the various views he examines.

One gets the feeling that these five models are not quite that distinct and that several of the theologians studied actually utilize more than one model in their explanation of revelation. Dulles himself acknowledges this; and when he turns to his own model, that of *symbolic communication,* he claims to draw the best from each of the other five models while avoiding their pitfalls.

Dulles tells his reader that the chapter on symbolic mediation is the key to the book, and so it is. It would not be fair to compress into a sentence or two the point of view that Dulles explains in careful and detailed fashion, but the focus of his approach is the intrinsic correspondence he sees between revelation and the function of symbol in personal communication. This is not exactly an original insight, but this book provides a clear and convincing picture of symbol's indispensable role in revelation. Given this link, there is a particular appropriateness to "symbolic communication" as a model for thinking about revelation. Moreover, Dulles then has a basis for drawing into his own model the best features of the other models he examines.

Basically, the chapter is a stimulating and valuable discussion of the role of symbol in religious knowledge, a discussion that engages fully in present-day study of symbolism; and for that very reason will trigger questions and differing opinions. In treating the symbolic dimensions of history, Dulles seems at times to concentrate too exclusively on the "externals" of historical happening and to overlook the centrality of human experience in historical event. On the other hand, one might ask if Dulles (e.g. in his description of metaphor, symbol, etc.) recognizes clearly enough the distinctiveness of historical symbolism as contrasted with natural symbols, a distinctiveness that is critically important for Christianity as an "historical religion."

One might also ask how far Dulles really trusts non-verbal symbols as heuristic tools for discovery or as means of communication. Granted that we must respect personal preference for one or other mode of thought, for logic rather than poetry. Yet at several points one

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gets the impression that theological reflection reaches the state of accuracy only when it has come to rational formulation and verbal expression. Art forms, liturgy, the poetic do not seem to qualify as genuine alternatives to "true affirmations," even though Dulles espouses a "symbolic communication" model.

Another question is whether Dulles gives enough weight to a person's experience of God as perhaps itself the fundamental symbol involved in the divine-to-human communication. True, he discusses at length the models of inner experience and new awareness, and admits the overlap between these and his own model. But he does not treat this "inner word" in human knowledge as the key to God revealing in symbol. This is more surprising because Dulles is so extensively influenced by Karl Rahner's theology of symbol.

Obviously, one cannot expect an author to do everything in one book, and Dulles has certainly handled a packed agenda in this volume. Still, given his concentration on symbol, it would have been valuable to see how he relates his own insights to David Tracy's *Analogical Imagination*. Apart from a couple of footnotes, Tracy's position goes unmentioned, though it is one of the most important recent contributions to the matters Dulles is discussing. Perhaps we can look forward to some such dialogue in future?

Having said this, a judgment of this book must be an enthusiastic recognition of its many merits. In style it is clear, precise, orderly, and readable. In exposition it is logical, balanced, and irenic. The positions it takes, even if one does not completely agree with one or other, are solid and well-grounded and creative. Dulles continues to enhance his reputation as a leader in fundamental theology.

Wild ride, wild language

FAMOUS ALL OVER TOWN

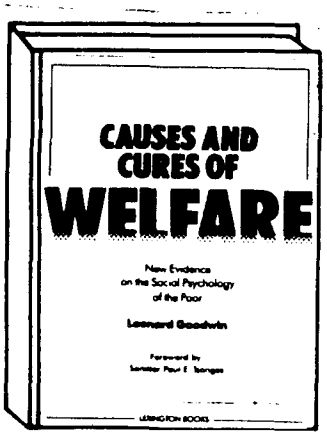
Danny Santiago

Simon and Schuster, $14.95, 285 pp.

Margaret Wimsatt

THE COUNTRY is full of problem kids, and ghettos and barrios produce many of them, as do Indian reservations. New York City might claim title as the most productive, but Los Angeles is certainly in the running. It is the setting for Danny Santiago's first novel. Seldom has the topic of juvenile delinquency been approached with such loving and knowledgeable irony.

Problem kids, as we all know, come from problem families and backgrounds, and Rudy M. Medina, Jr., (Chato) tells the story of his. Aged twenty-eight, he looks back on the summer of his fourteenth birthday. Shamrock Street, East L.A., had been only a slum then, but now it has gone, vanished, asphalted over by



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the Southern Pacific Railroad for freight yards. Rudy Sr., in the novel, is a would-be tough Mexican-American, generous and brutal by turns. Mammacita is tiny, and was raised in southern Mexico. Older sister Lena had been christened Tranquillina, but the first part of her name disappeared in babyhood; she is one of the most endearing female urchins of all time, usefully defending her asthmatic, undersized young brother, growing up tough but good. And there are father's compadres, mother's comadres. Chato's gang of friends and enemies, as well as policemen, juvenile workers, and relations on both sides of the border. That was an exciting summer on Shamrock Street, though maybe not

Religious booknotes

Beliefs into words: language & the religious

Mary Gerhart

IN ENGLAND, I'm told, one philosopher opens her first lecture of a university class typically with a jest: "People everywhere say that God is dead—but in England, it's true." The jest introduces the elusive distinction between language and reality.

A number of recent books examine a wide repertoire of linguistic and other forms which embody theistic belief. Belief is disguised and enigmatic in contemporary American fiction, ostensive—even ostentatious—in court trials, subversive in Hasidic texts, and unconventional when it appears as religious metaphor. Although not all of these books have theistic language as their central focus, together they ply the extent to which religious language informs human thought and action.

Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language, *by Sallie McFague. Fortress, 1982, $11.95, 225 pp.*

A major attempt to develop a conceptual language which would preserve, rather than replace, the tension intrinsic to all authentic religious language is to be found in Sallie McFague's *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*. McFague studies models in science and models in theology to show how their similarities and differences demonstrate that scientists and theologians share a common epistemology. Whether one takes the "high view" that both scientific and religious models reflect reality or the "low view" of the hermeneutic of suspicion, according to McFague, both views evaluate models on the basis of their explanatory power. On this basis also, McFague studies the dominant model for God in Christianity in her last chapter, "God the Father: Model or Idol?" Here McFague draws upon two kinds of feminist criticism to examine the power of the model in the Christian tradition: upon revolutionary feminists, who take women's liberation and the permanent ascendancy of the female principle as a primary value, and upon reformist feminists, who take human liberation and full equality between the sexes as a major objective. McFague's argument for an alternative model, God as Friend, places her centrally in the reformist tradition. As a sequel to *Speaking in Parables*, the book represents a major contribution to current theological discussion.

Jesus, Son of God? *by Edward Schillebeeckx and Johannes-Baptist Metz, eds., **Concilium** 153. T. & T. Clark Ltd. and Seabury, 1982, $6.95, 79 pp.*

Jesus, Son of God?, a collection of invited essays for *Concilium*, is a daring examination of the meaning of christology. In their foreword, editors Edward Schillebeeckx and Johann Metz remark on Islam's becoming the second strongest religious affiliation, after Catholicism in France, and caution that the traditional meanings of christology can no longer be taken for granted. In "'Son of God': Reflections on a Metaphor," Nicholas Lash argues that a metaphoric understanding of both statements—"God exists" and "Jesus is the Son of God"—is a true understanding of God and of Jesus Christ. Jon Sobrino limits himself to "the reality and meaning of faith from the standpoint of oppression"—a standpoint which, he argues, is by right most apt and in fact most scripturally accurate. Two essays on the Hebrew and Christian testamental meanings of the title "Son of God" by Herbert Haag and Bas van Iersel, an historical essay "Chalcedon: Then and Now" by Tarsicius van Bavel, and a schematic essay on the relation of christology to non-Christian religions make this slim volume an insightful key to the state of the question today. Not all readers may be aware that *Concilium* is a quarterly international theological journal which is published in this country in book form only.

Spiritual Discernment and Politics: Guidelines for Religious Communities, *by J.B. Libanio, Orbis, $6.95, 131 pp.*

In *Spiritual Discernment and Politics*, J. B. Libanio takes Ignatius Loyola's general intention "to seek God in everything" to mean that a dynamic, critical sense of justice is intrinsic to the act of discernment. Libanio notices that the word "justice," frequently used in the documents of Vatican II, is alien to Marxist vocabulary. He maintains that justice involves "concrete mediation" on three levels of action, all of which have political connotations. As an example of the risk to be taken in

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anything out of the ordinary.

Language is the eye of thought, and to be bilingual doubles the vision. But to be, as it has been described, illiterate in two languages, creates the problems Santiago's characters face. Ignorance of, and disdain for, Norte-Americano ways got Chato and his friends into scrapes with The Law. It lost for the Shamrock Street residents their homes and their satisfactory way of life. Of course it also gave them a sense of community which while it lasted was feudal and chivalric — and funny, to the outsider, as Don Quixote's world has always been to its readers. This sense of the tragi-comic gives the novel its power. The stolen-car ride that ends in the death of young Rudy's friend Pelon is

concrete mediation, he offers the life of Francis of Assisi who, he says, "moved very close to condemned heretics." Although this book does not address the issue of the involvement of professed religious in politics, it makes an important contribution to that issue, as well as to a contemporary understanding of discernment and Ignatian spirituality.

In his third book, *Moral Fiber: Character and Belief in Recent American Fiction*, Wesley A. Kort orchestrates a religious and literary context

***Moral Fiber: Character and Belief in Recent American Fiction**, by Wesley A. Kort, Fortress, 1982, $9.95, 160 pp.*

for understanding the works of several contemporary American novelists: Mailer, Oates, Gardner, Kerouac, Bellow, Kesey, Vonnegut, Barth, and Pynchon. Explicating their work under one of three themes—explorers of the territory ahead, marginal people, and priests of the possible—Kort also recalls theological and literary predecessors of each group of new novelists. In the end, Kort proposes that Wisdom literature may be the scriptural and theological tradition which best illuminates this fiction. The result is a multi-faceted, it necessarily brief, treatment of a part of American literature which often seems intransigent to religious reflection. Kort's analysis is helpful for understanding individual texts and recent American fiction as a whole.

At issue in Richard Fenn's *Liturgies and Trials: The Secularization of Religious Language* is the tension between individual and corporate rights. Three recent court trials provide evidence for his thesis that religious language has lost its effectiveness in defending the individual's right to act on certain principles which challenge existing laws: the case of *Karen Ann Quinlan vs. the State of New Jersey*,

***Liturgies and Trials: The Secularization of Religious Language**, by Richard K. Fenn. The Pilgrim Press, 1982, $15.95, 215 pp.*

the trial of the Catonsville Nine, and the case *Re. Maria Cueto and Raisa Nemikin*. Fenn charges churches with failing to define the extent of religious claims before the law, and the judicial system with reducing religious language to literal and idiosyncratic opinions. He provides an interesting analysis of religious language (which he calls "eventful") and contrasts it with an example of secular language (which he calls "uneventful"). One need not always agree with Fenn, for example, with his equating the abstraction of meaning from utterance with the "fall from divine presence," to be persuaded that the issue he raises deserves sustained attention and public discussion. Fenn's first book was *Toward a Theory of Secularization* (1978).

***The Human Way: A Dialogic Approach to Religion and Human Experience**, by Maurice Friedman. Anima Books, 1982, $13.95, 195 pp.*

Maurice Friedman, reflecting on Hasidic stories and statements of Martin Buber, attempts to overcome the abstractions which he claims flaw most theologies, in particular those of Tillich and the process theologians. *The Human Way: A Dialogic Approach to Religion and Human Experience* does not, however, oppose abstraction with immediacy: Instead of immediacy, Friedman proposes an "indirect knowledge" which is capable of objectifying and categorizing and at the same time of returning to dialogical knowing. Yet he places a premium on the unmediated as distinctive of the experience of the divine. One of his previous books, *Touchstones of Reality*, is frequently quoted here as a touchstone for contrasting the best of two diverse traditions on what he calls the paradox of religious leadership.

In *Human Rights in Religious Traditions*, edited by Arlene Swidler, representatives of the world's major religions examine a relatively new term which has become prominent in

***Human Rights in Religious Traditions**, Arlene Swidler, ed. The Pilgrim Press, 1982, $8.95, 114 pp.*

contemporary political and ethical discussion. The editor states the questions which are central to all of the invited essays. The projected definition of "human rights" in each tradition, its theoretical basis and area of application, its success or need for further development, and the possibility of consensus on the evaluation of situations referred to by the term—consideration of these questions reveals unexpected points of contrast among the traditions. The essays on human rights in Protestantism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism, are responded to by a social historian, an ethicist, an economist, and a psychiatrist. The inclusion of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" adopted by the United Nations in 1948 and a select bibliography makes this small book a valuable reference tool as well as a critical study.

Verbal difference, it would seem, is often more than a quibble.

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funny almost all the way. The macho attitudes, the heavy hands, of old Rudy and his compadres are funny because Mammacita and her comadres and her daughter by guile achieve their ends — after enduring blows. All this is told in a complex language brew: murdered Spanish, murdered English, combine on the page to be intelligible, even eloquent. "My fingers slided back and forth." "It costed me nothing." "He never once discriminated me." "Seldom if never." "No quieras un free shoeshine." Language as tool, as means to an end.

The picaresque plot cannot be summarized and need not be, except to mention its high point: the wild ride of the Medinas to Titatlán in southern Mexico, to visit Mammacita's relatives, and their return. As usual, tough Father is the sucker, his son, the wise one. The author's eyes and voice provide an insight into the sad funniness of life. Danny Santiago has written a love letter, in Chicano. With music, it would make a fine scenario.

Other Americas, on blue highways (cont.)

(Continued from page 305)

moments when he falls into philosophizing that the book becomes, momentarily, banal. "As I started the engine, Wheeler said, 'If you get back this way, stop in and see me. Always got beans and taters and a little piece of meat.' Down along the ridge, I wondered why it's always those who live on little who are the ones to ask you to dinner."

Without even a dog as company, Moon found companionship in hitchhikers, monks, fishermen, Cajun chanky-chank musicians, tavernkeeps, Indians. Moon is himself part Indian, not an "apple Indian" (red outside, white inside) but a real Sioux, son of Heat Moon, younger brother of Little Heat Moon. He, Bill Trogdon, is also a descendant of pioneers. His namesake, William Trogdon, eight generations back, earned mention in Makers of America by getting killed for providing food to rebel patriots in North Carolina.

Just when one is beginning to believe that all of the United States has become one homogeneous mass, *Blue Highways* leads one to remote corners of the North Carolina Outer Banks, back bayou Louisiana, lost gasoline stations in the desert, and the inhabitants thereof. Neither locales nor people are in the least homogenized and Moon has a rare sensitivity to both landscape and people.

"In a season on the blue roads," Moon asks at the end of the journey and book, "what had I accomplished? I hadn't sailed the Atlantic in a washtub, or crossed the Gobi in a goat cart, or bicycled to Cape Horn. In my own country, I had gone out, had met, had shared. I had stood as witness."

As Conrad said of his own writing goals: "That is all, and it is everything."

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Medicine is its own worst enemy

THE YOUNGEST SCIENCE
NOTES OF A MEDICINE-WATCHER
Lewis Thomas
Viking, $14.95, 270 pp.

William R. Ayers

I AM MAD at Lewis Thomas. He has written my book. That he has done so with greater perceptivity, more incisive language, and almost poetic phraseology is immaterial. It is also irrelevant that I cannot draw on as rich a list of experiences as he. My father was not a physician, so I did not have the opportunity to observe him in general practice in the early 1900s. Nor did I graduate from Harvard, intern at the Boston City, train at the Neurologic Institute in New York City, do research at the Rockefeller Institute, Hopkins, Tulane or the University of Minnesota, chair departments at NYU, take sabbatical at Cambridge, Dean at NYU and Yale, or round off as Chancellor at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. It would make little difference if I had, for few possess Thomas's clarity, wit or wisdom to profit by such experiences. Each is a career in itself.

In between the chapters of pure narration, he has skillfully interspersed essays on House Calls, Leeches, Nurses, endotoxin, olfaction, and illness. Who else would find incredible beauty in mycoplasmas or link blood hounds, tracking mice, and the mechanism of skin-graft rejection. How many others injected enzymes into rabbits' veins but failed to notice that their ears softened, finally hanging down like spaniels'? From such keen observations does serendipity spring.

Medicine sorely needs a book like *The Youngest Science* now. The profession is under attack from without and within. Medical students are scientific automatons, masters of multiple guess exams, unable to think, only to regurgitate. Medical school curricula are immutable

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anachronisms, packed with unnecessary research facts, out of step with the modern needs of an ever more sophisticated consumer. Residents are overworked, buried in technology, trained rather than educated. Practitioners are money-grabbing, and insensitive.

Lewis Thomas gives us the fire and fun of learning and growing. He admonishes beginning students to be apprehensive lest their real job, caring for sick people, be taken away, leaving them with the quite different occupation of looking after machines. He is on the side of nurses who want their professional status enhanced and their pay increased, who infuriate doctors by their claims to be equal professionals. He dislikes computers because they are personally humiliating. This from the one who elsewhere has classified technology in the most lucid of terms. Artificial intelligence he dislikes. He prefers the lanthanic presentation of the unexpected connection; fallible, unpredictable creativity.

One of Thomas's knacks is the use of an uncertain tongue-in-cheek. Does he really mean that Oliver Wendell Holmes's dictum (the key to longevity is to have a chronic incurable disease and take good care of it) works? Can so learned a man's impression that he has gained more from his wife than he has given to her be accurate? Surely his proposal to put women, born teachers and nurturers, in charge of thermonuclear decisions is not serious. Does he, in fact, believe that humans, the most improbable of all earth's creatures, will survive because of more improbable luck?

The careful reader will hear a clarion in Thomas's words. Medicine is its own worst enemy. It is not just that the funding policies of the National Institutes of Health in the mid-1950s fostered the idea that all faculty members in every medical school must be working scientists with research grants. It is rather that the financial stability of the university medical center depends on it. As federal dollars are withdrawn, the onus of balancing the budget falls to increased tuition, greater endowment, larger practice loads, new liaisons with private industry or some combination of all the above. The tragedies have already been written. To

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survive in the competitive grantsmanship game, pressured researchers have falsified results and published lies. Unbridled conflicts of interest between entrepreneurs and universities sit on the horizon. Perhaps Dr. Thomas's reflections on "hope" mute the clarion.

I am not really mad at Lewis Thomas; just jealous. No one could have done better. Or as well.

Searching for God—& adulthood

NUN, A MEMOIR

Mary Gilligan Wong
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich,
$15.95, 390 pp.

SEMINARY, A SEARCH

Paul Hendrickson
Summit, $14.95, 330 pp.

Jack Miles

MARY GILLIGAN WONG's convent is more decisively behind her than Paul Hendrickson's seminary will ever be behind him. Her "Intimate Account of One Woman's Years in the Convent and Her Eventual Return to the World" is, as that jacket line suggests, straightforward narrative. When the narrative is over, so is most of the puzzling over it. In a brief concluding chapter, "Last Thoughts," Wong says, "I have no regrets" and even lists a number of traits which she is grateful to have and which, as she sees it, she owes to her convent years. Her tone is peaceful—settled rather than smug—and in this is more typical of ex-priests and ex-nuns than Hendrickson's is.

I have already written about Hendrickson's book in the *Los Angeles Times*, and I would like to draw on that review in making my comparison here. Most works in the broad genre of Catholic memoir are either confession or diatribe. In either case, the reader feels that whatever search took place, it was over before the writing began. Hendrickson's search, by contrast, is still under way, and his book races on with the excitement and the pain of it.

Nineteen of Hendrickson's twenty classmates are now ex-seminarians or ex-priests. Only part of his book deals with seminary life itself. For much of it, we find him on the road, looking his classmates up, searching them out, and talking to them. The talk is good talk, with exactly the dry, wry tone I recall from my own seminary years:

"Why did you want to be a priest?"

"Little bit of Crusader Rabbit, maybe."

"Did you want to save souls?"

"Why not?"

Crusader Rabbit, not John XXIII or John Kennedy or John Wayne. The trick was to deflate your own idealism preemptively, make a joke out of it before *they* did, and thus rescue it. Unfortunately for the church, this kind of ironic and public offense was rarely a good private defense. Only for the single remaining priest among Hendrickson's seminary classmates does it seem to have evolved into something more lasting and more nearly adult.

Hendrickson asks his former roommate, now Fr. Bertin Glennon, a country pastor in Kentucky who happens also to be chairman of the local transit authority, chairman of the zoning board, chairman of the Regional Capital Improvement Program, and vice-president of the Clay County Development Association, "Do you think about the seminary much?" Glennon answers him: "Truthfully, no, Paul. Most of it is a blur. They weren't the greatest years of my life, and they weren't the worst. It was something I had to do, I guess, to get here."

Seminary is the courtship stage in the priestly life. In that sense, Fr. Glennon is a married man.

According to the publisher, serial rights to *Seminary* have been sold to *Playboy* and *Esquire*. I can only guess that one of the portions sold is Hendrickson's account of the strange, sexualized relationship that he maintained, or endured, for six years with his seminary spiritual father. Though neither man ever touched the other, the story is erotically as shocking as anything I have ever read. D.H. Lawrence, could he have imagined it, would have loved to write it, but D.H. Lawrence would likely have got it backwards. I doubt that anything in the anti-Catholic fantasy literature of life behind monastery walls, anything anyone ever invented to mock or embarrass the Catholic clergy, could match it for power. Hendrickson—sexually explicit, even graphic, in telling a story that is painful in the first place to himself—deserves credit both as a writer and as a man; and the account itself has something crucial to do with his search.

Did that search begin with the memory of a terrible, bloody night when Hendrickson's mother, unassisted, gave birth in the upstairs bedroom of her snowbound farmhouse to a dead infant? Did he decide, some ten years later, to enter the seminary because the priesthood "suddenly began to represent to an eighth-grade boy an antiseptic and asexual sanctuary — a haven, a womb, for conflicts too large and jumbled to solve . . . about birth, death, intercourse? Is that it? It sounds right, and sometimes it also sounds a little like a late-night TV movie." Hendrickson does not talk much about God. He talks instead about the priests who talked to him about God when he, just a boy of fourteen, wanted to be like them. Was his love for them the mediated love of God, or was it a blend of eroticized hero-worship and flight from adulthood?

Hendrickson presents this psychological alternative at full strength, offering his own life and, as it were, his own body in evidence. Having done that, he draws back, refusing the psychological alternative and yet not accepting the theological alternative either but only clinging to the question.

While Hendrickson is not an ex-priest, Wong *is* an ex-nun. The story she tells goes past her time of formation several years into her life as a working, professed woman religious. Hendrickson entered the seminary as a boy and left as an adolescent. Wong did more of her growing up while she was still under vows. When she left, she was more nearly the adult she now is than he was when he left. He was a seminarian for seven years. Beginning as he did at the age of fourteen, she was a member of her community for elev-

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en years. During her last four years, however, 1965-1969, so much was going on in the church! She worked in a ghetto, read Hans Küng at Fordham, joined an encounter group. Personal and institutional transformation overlap more in her story than in his. Despite Hendrickson's visits to his classmates, it is her book that, taken as a document of the period, is the more representative.

Nun is well-written, but the accident of its publication in the same season with *Seminary* has not served it well. Wong, a talented amateur, has been forced to compete with a brilliant professional writer, twice nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. On its own terms, however, which are those of a story rather than those of Hendrickson's "search," *Nun* is a work of great charm and strength.

Hendrickson's story begins in thunder and parturition, Wong's ends there, and something important hangs on the difference. She writes, "Raam Darian Wong was born February 19, 1980 as lightning flashed and thunder split the sky. He came before we could even leave the house for the hospital and spent his first night nestled close to Mom, Dad, and his proud brother. Eleven years of sleeping

alone in cold-sheeted narrow beds; three men shared my bed and my love now — the revenge was ever so sweet."

Well, she who has no regrets does not really mean "revenge," but we know what she does mean, and we forgive her for using the wrong word. The awkward girl who despaired of normalcy, who was convinced that "no matter how much I tried I would never be accepted among the red-blooded American girls of the world," has made it. That simple human quest, rather than the more paradoxical religious one, is what her book is really all about. Her success in it explains why in the end *Nun* is so much more satisfying — and so much less disturbing — than *Seminary*.

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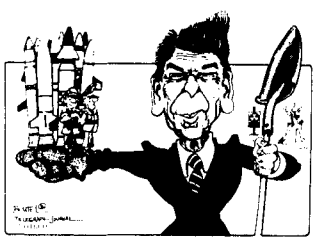
Pheme Perkins

THESE two books provide a rich diet for the reader interested in the history of the Graeco-Roman period. Michael Grant's study of the period between Alexander and Augustus describes the cultural transformation of the world which created the cities and shaped the lives of the "first urban Christians." The first half of Grant's book provides a traditional historical survey of the time complete with numerous maps and genealogical charts of the ruling houses. However, one who has read Wayne Meeks's study of the emergence of the Pauline churches in the 50s A.D. will have to disagree with Grant's claim that Pauline Christianity was an initial failure and only attained its vigorous growth after the disastrous defeat of the Jews by the Romans in 70 A.D. Grant's description of the sociological patterns in the cities of this period points to the influence of the traditions of hellenistic monarchs and the creation of a small wealthy class at the top of the city's hierarchy. The decline of small land-holding, fluctuations in market prices and harvests led to the creation of a bottom of destitute poor in the same cities. Though the problem was occasionally acknowledged, no one had any solution.

Meeks's description of the first urban Christians shows us the middle of that society. These people are often merchants and artisans who are non-citizen, resident aliens in their cities. They maintained their ethnic identity by establishing cults to worship native gods and by joining trade associations. The Jewish community formed a special minority. Excluded from local power, some found the road to advancement by cultivating highly placed Roman patrons.

Meeks's primary innovation in the study of these early Christians is his use of sociological categories to speak of them as people whose lives were marked by *status inconsistency*. Such people found themselves excluded by birth, lack of hereditary citizenship, and the like, to the status which their level of education, wealth, and personal achievement might otherwise have entitled them. Meeks argues that such persons would find the Pauline paradox of Christ as the one who was slave and crucified yet the exalted Son of God an apt representation of their own paradoxical status. At the same time, their struggles for status may underlie much of the turmoil one finds reflected in churches like the one at Corinth.

The reader will find that the second half of Grant's book fills a gap left by



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There is no civil defense against Armageddon, and that is the hard truth; it is criminal of the administration to suggest otherwise . . . Congress should insist that President Reagan begin really serious negotiations with the Soviets — negotiations aimed at stopping and then reversing the nuclear arms race which now threatens humanity's very survival. That would be true civil defense, the only rational kind of civil defense open to us . . .

Commonweal, May 7, 1982

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Meeks's descriptions.Grant turns to describe the universal culture created in the hellenistic period for this group of people. His account is illustrated by black and white photographs of coins and of various hellenistic works of art. He notes that a system of education spread throughout the cities which created a "middle class" reading public for the popular histories and novels which begin to appear. This public also included women readers, and women poets and artists appear as well. One finds a discernible shift in literary fashion toward the treatment of heterosexual love; toward the romantic novel, and toward fantastic utopian dreams. On the artistic side hellenistic portraiture moves toward realism and landscape becomes a theme for painting.

Grant argues that the primary religious and philosophical quest of these people was for self-sufficiency. They sought ways to become invulnerable to the sufferings and reversals of life. Meeks, drawing on the work of Roman historian, Ramsey MacMullen, cautions against presuming that people were using the cults to express or cure anxieties about immortality. He argues that there is little

REVIEWERS

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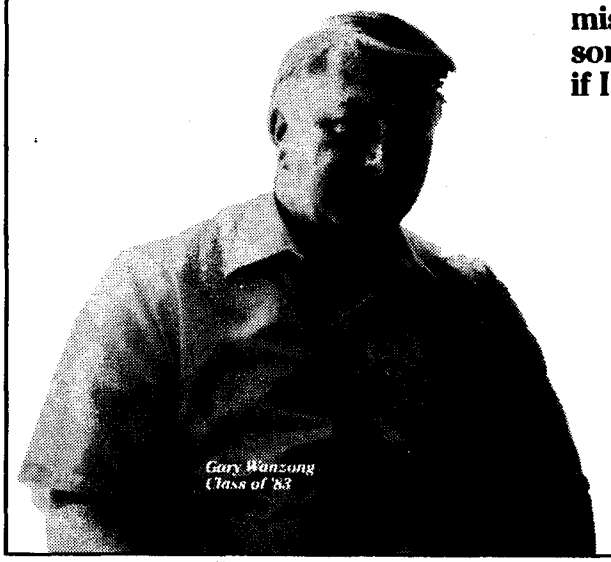
"I always wanted to be a priest, but I thought I would be missing something if I did. . . . . .now I think I would be missing something if I didn't."



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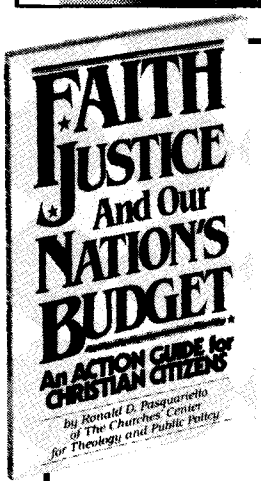

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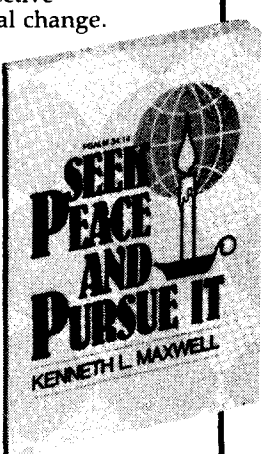

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escapism in ancient religious cults. Even Grant, who still takes the older view, does come to agree that the popular Isis cult was not concerned with the future life as much as with individual prosperity and success in this life.

Meeks argues that the church not only reflected the experience of these people in the middle of society, it also provided them with a new way of belonging. The Pauline communities are characterized by high levels of intimacy and personal interaction. They emphasized internal cohesion and separation from others, "the world," in their sacramental imagery. The dominating metaphors of the community are taken from the family which one enters through the adoption that occurs in baptism. Here, the Spirit provided direct modes of interaction that were not weighted with the inconsistencies and paradoxes of the roles one played in the larger society. The ethical instruction of these communities stressed the virtues of internal cohesion and mutual responsibility. Special emphasis was laid on the responsibility of the "strong" Christians to their weaker fellow Christians. All were to be united in their common loyalty to God. At the same time, this community is conscious of its position "on stage" before the larger society. Consequently, its moral norms were seen as expressing the will of God in such a way that outsiders could also recognize it as good.

Both books remind us that the hellenistic period is one in which people sought a more universal vision of humanity. Grant describes the Stoic images of a universal citizenship. Meeks points to the Christian vision of a new humanity that has come from the messiah Jesus. Though the Christian vision gave rise to a social structure that would survive the demise of the world in which it grew up, we yet find ourselves caught in the paradox of seeking a universal vision. Insofar as the Graeco-Roman world had an answer, it was the creation of a common culture out of the heritage of the Greek conquerors, on the one hand, or the creation of a new form of religious association which did not depend upon status or origins, on the other. We may well wonder upon finishing these two studies, if humanity is yet finished with the experiment upon which we embarked two millennia ago.

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Correspondence

(Continued from page 290)

owed to Ulster Catholics, Reverend Cobain alleges that the problem is only a deficiency in the establishment's public relations.

Reverend Cobain's article misrepresents the plight of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland, past and present. How can peace and justice ever be effected in Northern Ireland if the Reverend Cobain and his colleagues refuse to distance themselves from the garrison mentality which has unfortunately been the defining characteristic of Ulster Protestantism? Why this attempt at self-justification abroad instead of reconciliation at home ANTHONY BRADLEY

Fascism & Falklands

College Park, Md.

To the Editors: Your editorial "Fortress Falklands" [Feb. 25] calls attention to the fact that the debate in the House of Commons left unsettled the question of the long-term British administration of the archipelago. You recall that Thatcher supports a "Fortress Falklands" because as she says, "There is no other course if Britain is to honor the preferences of the Falklanders as to the government they want to live under," but that David Owen thinks that it is the responsibility of the prime minister to reach an understanding with Latin America over the islands.

Your editorial brings up also the fact that the estimate of the cost of recapturing the islands and to garrison them for four years and make them economically viable will be $4.8 billion which amounts to $3 million for each islander. You add that second thoughts may lead to some kind of internationally negotiated solution.

In the editorial not a word was said about the nature of the governments that have controlled Argentina for the last fifty years. *Commonweal* must be well aware of the fact that in Argentina there is no bill of rights, and there are no judges, and that the country is run arbitrarily by

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the military, for their personal benefit. Like all fascisms the Argentine one needs, to stay in power, a "national" enemy. Ten years ago a war with Chile about buoys in the Beagle Canal was avoided at the last minute. When the patriotic fervor cooled off, the "neocolonialism of the British Empire" became the scapegoat. In the meantime the list of Argentines tortured to death reached thirty thousand. You neglect to consider this situation when you suggest that Britain should look for an agreement with Argentina.

The people of the islands are British and unanimously want to remain so. Do the rights of man have a price like the stock of big companies? Shouldn't the people in the Falklands decide whether they will be a part of Argentina, or they will remain a part of Britain, or be independent? Would you suggest that the U.S. make a deal with Mexico over Texas and California? Mexican title to one-fourth of the U.S. territory is better than the Argentine title over the Falklands and its government much more respectful of human rights. People born in Argentina are subjected to persecution when they do not accept the fascist regime of the military—the same military that during World War II did everything they could to help Hitler defeat Britain and the U.S. What kind of fate can the islanders expect, who have a different language, culture and religion than the Argentines? Wouldn't the Falklands end as East Timor?

It is true that it costs money for Britain to keep forces in Belize, and much more so to defend Gibraltar. But it is also true that people from Belize would be exterminated by "our friends" the Guatemalan military, and Franco would already have disposed of the people of Gilbraltar, if the British had left.

There is a small island in the Caribbean between Jamaica and Cuba, not far from Salvador. The name of the island is Grand Cayman, and it is inhabited by twenty thousand people who want to remain British. They are rather poor but they contributed $1 million out of their own pockets to Britain for the Falklands campaign. As the black people of Belize and the white people of the Falklands, they want to live under a system of laws that guarantee human rights.

I was born in Argentina, as my father was. I love the country. The day the fascists were defeated at Port Stanley I prayed. I asked the Lord to save the Queen. AUGUST J. DURELLI

Church/world watch

(Continued from page 298)

dangerous turn the arms race took when it moved toward MIRVing. Kissinger was associated with that move, but now sees its consequences as so detrimental that he urges quite drastic remedial steps. The lesson of MIRV is that concern for reversing the arms race must be not only vigorous and broad-based but specific and selective. Some decisions are systemically hazardous for arms control; these need to be given priority in our concern to control the technological dynamic of the nuclear race. The MIRV decision escaped adequate analysis in the public sector. We can't afford other slips in the future. J. BRYAN HEHIR

Robert Coles on INTELLECTUALS

For many years, as I have worked, trying to understand how all sorts of families make do, often against considerable odds, I have written articles and books for interested fellow citizens. Soon enough, I have received the expected responses. But on one score I confess to perplexity, even alarm – an absence, almost total, of reaction when it comes to an entire side of my work. I refer to the descriptions I've rendered of the religious thoughts and feelings of the children and adults I've come to know.

All I need do, it seems, is come up with a social conclusion, make a psychological generalization, attempt a literary analysis, try portraying a certain kind of personal or regional life, and there are thoughtful (appreciatively or reprovingly so) correspondents willing to share their evaluations publicly. But when I have tried to describe how, say, an old Spanish-speaking woman from northern New Mexico, or a Southern black child, or an Appalachian white child, or a small-town working-class man happen to feel about Jesus and His words and deeds, then the result is either the silence already mentioned, or rarely, a puzzled, frustrated truculence: "I don't see why you get yourself into all that religious talk! If you're trying to prove that people are superstitious, or need a crutch, then a page is enough, not a chapter or half a book!"

In my own case, the attention given religious faith is held even more suspect because I'm a psychiatrist – and so, presumably, "educated" and "perceptive" enough (so I was told in another friendly letter!) to "know better"! I should be what an intellectual ought to be – someone who analyzes how others think and feel, who gives reasons for one or another moment of history. The civil rights struggle, for instance: I ought have kept my mind on the various "variables" that prompted it.

Meanwhile, there is this young man from Birmingham, Alabama, speaking in 1965: "I don't know why I said no to segregation. I'm just another white Southerner, and I wasn't brought up to love integration! But I was brought up to love Jesus Christ, and when I saw the police of this city use dogs on people, I asked myself what Jesus would have done – and that's all I know about how I came to be here, on the firing line!"

Intellectuals also need to document how people's beliefs prompt them to live their lives. And I fear that when I started doing that I learned something about myself and my kind – how arrogant and self-centered we risk becoming: interested in our own heady assertions, and anxious to be the spokespersons for all those others, who don't write and teach and come up with new ideas, but who rather, try to go from one day to the next, and who yes, in large numbers indeed, keep calling on Jesus, not the intellectuals, for guidance. –from the June 1982 NEW OXFORD REVIEW.

If you are interested in exploring the beliefs behind the "data" – in probing the deeper religious feelings embedded in our lives, however much we try to ignore them – if you want to *understand* what moves a Martin Luther King Jr., a Lech Walesa, an Archbishop Romero, a Mother Teresa, a Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Polish Pope, a Simone Weil, a Dorothy Day, a George Orwell, then you're ready to look into the NEW OXFORD REVIEW. We are spearheading the renewed interest among today's intellectuals in what Daniel Bell terms "the sacred." Robert Coles writes a regular column called "Harvard Diary," and like him, our writers – Peter L. Berger, J.M. Cameron, Erazim Kohák, Juli Loesch, Dale Vree, and others – express themselves with clarity, verve, style, and "heart." Published monthly, we have been praised by *Newsweek* for being "thoughtful," and the *Library Journal* predicts we will "doubtless command increasing attention."

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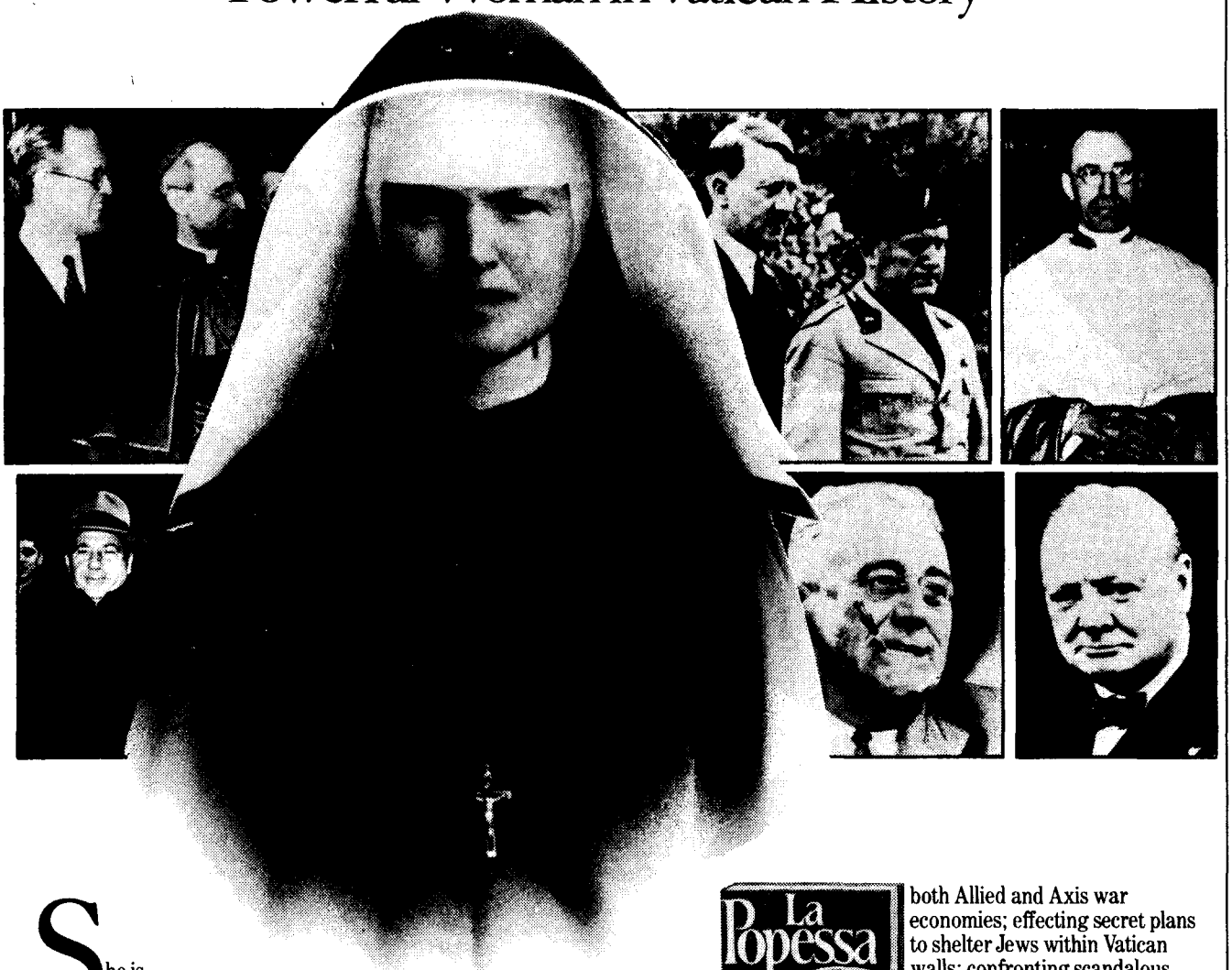

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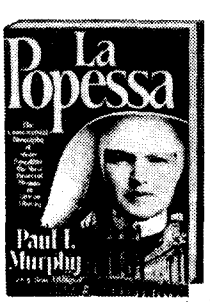

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